

FILM FANTASY! TV TERROR! VIDED VIOLENCE! A QUALITY MAGAZINE

HORROR

HALLS OF

60p • \$2.00

FEAR-FILLED
FIRST
NEW-LOOK
EDITION

BRITAIN'S
AWARD WINNING
FANTASY SCREEN
JOURNAL RETURNS

featuring

A FREE FULL COLOUR
16½ x 11¾" POSTER

THE MONSTER CLUB
--told in pictures by
top fantasy artist
John Bolton



The Spawn of Psycho

ROBERT BLOCH
INTERVIEW

PSYCHO STABBING
--THE TRUTH!

THE HISTORY OF
SLASH MOVIES

HAMMER'S
PSYCHO
SCREAMERS

CLASSIC GORE:

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
DERANGED • DEATH TRAP
HALLOWEEN • FRIDAY THE 13th

VIDEO
VENGEANCE
Ramsey Campbell
cuts down the hacks

25



Vol 3 No 1

WELCOME BACK!

Outside of a Winter Special, devoted to the out-of-print work of the late Brian Lewis, it's taken exactly five years to explain what happened. Following three slightly different titles across its 23 issue run, **House of Hammer**, **House of Horror**, **Halls of Horror** suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

While its place was partially taken over by **Starburst**, involving the same creative team, what happened to **HoH** remained a mystery to anyone not attending fantasy conventions.

Now it can be told: the publishing parent company (W.H. Allen) decided to fold their magazine side. **MAD Magazine** became the property of Siron International Publications, under the editorship of Ron Letchford, and **HoH** was bought by us.

Both magazines had been doing fine. Unfortunately the rest of the company's line, of a more dubious 'glamour magazine' content, were not.

Marvel expressed interest in both **Starburst** and its editor, but, sadly, not in **HoH**. In fact, in **Starburst** 1, I rashly promised we'd be around for a l-o-n-g time. Thanks to Alan McKenzie, who took over editorship from me with issue 20, **Starburst** is still around, five years later.

Now, thanks to Quality Communications' success with **Warrior**, **HoH** returns, albeit possibly in competition with its own offspring, **Starburst**.

We do feel, however, that **HoH** had its own identity in those early days, and this is something its new editor, Dave Reeder, intends to strengthen over the coming months. Hopefully, the market is large enough for both **Starburst** and **HoH** to co-exist, reflecting different views, and different aspects, of the fantasy screen.

One of the main aspects of the original **HoH** which we have retained is the inclusion of a comic strip adaptation of a fantasy film. Whether this will continue is, as always, subject to its popularity.

Suffice to say ... **WE'RE BACK!** Over to you, Dave ...
Dez Skinn/Publisher

Some things are worth waiting for.

I've savoured this moment since that first tattered copy of **Famous Monsters** all those years ago. I've savoured it and planned what I would do if ever (choke!) I had my chance and ...

I wasn't ready for the months of hard work since Dez asked me to resurrect his award-winning **Halls of Horror**; I wasn't ready for the hours we plotted and schemed and ripped through ideas like demented chain-saws; most of all I wasn't ready to explain to my mother that my 'diseased' interest had finally led me to producing the evil stuff. So this is for her; but we hope that our one guiding rule will make **Halls of Horror** the fantasy film magazine for you -

This is the monster film magazine Dez and I always wanted to read ourselves!

Halls of Horror will be original, serious without being dull, and fun without being childish. Each issue will take an oblique look at a new fantasy film (or two) and put it into perspective. We'll be talking both about the latest London release and the turkey slipped onto late-night TV. We love them all and we're going to have fun.

And so will you; you're in at the start of another new and exciting idea from Quality, home of the equally original **Warrior**. We know you'll join us - we hope you'll let us know how we're doing so that **Halls of Horror** becomes the magazine you've been waiting for too.

Don't forget: ask for Quality and you'll get the best!

And that's a promise.

Dave Reeder/Editor



Editorial Director
DEZ SKINN

Editor:
DAVE REEDER

Assistant Editor:
SIÂN OSLEY

Design:
DEXTER CRAIG

Design assistance:
GARRY LEACH
STEVE 'WIN' WIACEK
RICHARD FISHER

Writers this issue:
RAMSEY CAMPBELL
TONY CRAWLEY
GLEN DAVIES
KEITH DUDLEY
JOHN FLEMING
STEVE JONES
MICHEL PARRY
DAVID PIRIE
DAVE REEDER
DEZ SKINN
JIM STERANKO
ANTHONY TATE

Artists this issue
JOHN BOLTON
GARRY LEACH (cover)

HALLS OF HORROR is published quarterly (March, June, September and December) by Quality Communications Limited, 3 Lewisham Way, London, SE14. The entire contents are copyright and may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form, except for the purpose of review, without the written permission of the copyright holders. All photographic material is copyright (c) BBC, NBC, ABC, CBS, ITC, Columbia-EMI-Warner, New Realm, Rank, 20th Century Fox, UIP, Paramount, Oppiden, Walt Disney Productions, CIC, MGM, MCA-Universal, unless stated otherwise.

Exclusive North American suppliers: Titan Distributors Ltd., PO Box 250, London E3 4RT

HALLS OF HORROR is copyright © Quality Communications Ltd.,

PSYCHO II

4

The path from Psycho to Psycho II is littered with corpses. Editor Dave Reeder picks his way through the tangled story.

THE BLOCH INTERVIEW

5

Robert 'Psycho' Bloch talks about his career, his morbid sense of humour and his latest book, Psycho II, to Jim Steranko.

THE BLOCH FILMOGRAPHY 9

From Psycho to The Dead Don't Die: the complete Robert Bloch filmography including his three screen appearances.

PSYCHO STABBING

10

The truth of who was in charge of this classic film sequence, plus how it was done. Feature by Tony Crawley.

THE SPAWN OF PSYCHO 15

An overview of Psycho's children through the 'slash' movies of the 1960s and 1970s. Feature by Michel Parry.

HORROR ON THE CHEAP 22

Robert Bloch, Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky made six films together for Amicus. Stephen Jones gives us the background.

THE MONSTER CLUB

26

A look at a unique marketing concept by author Dez Skinn plus a fourteen page adaptation by John Bolton.

A TASTE OF PARANOIA

44

A full study of Hammer's psychological movies from Taste of Fear to Fear in the Night by Keith Dudley and Glen Davies.

CLASSIC GORE

48

The five greatest 'slash' movies re-presented and re-reviewed. Quake again as you are reminded of The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Deranged, Halloween, Death Trap and Friday the 13th by John Fleming, David Pirie and Anthony Tate.

CAMPBELL'S CORNER

53

Round out the issue in controversial style with regular columnist Ramsey Campbell.

0101 714 893 2185

AT LAST PSYCHO II

Feature by
Dave
Reeder

Although a newcomer to the professional magazine world, Dave Reeder has been active in the amateur fantasy scene for some years. He edited the *British Fantasy Society Bulletin* for two years before moving on to edit and publish the horror fiction fanzine *Fantasy Macabre*, and write a number of stories and poems for markets such as *Fantasy Tales*, *Ghosts and Scholars* and *Eldritch Tales* both in the UK and US. When not helping with projects for Quality, he works as a librarian in London.

It was inevitable, in an industry currently dominated by sequels and remakes, that the eyes of studio executives would one day turn to Alfred Hitchcock's classic *Psycho*. What is surprising is that it has taken twenty-three years to bring *Psycho II* to your screens instead of the usual two or three.

Yet the story is more involved that it first appears: in the last year there has been news of no less than three very different versions of *Psycho II*.

Firstly, two young American filmmakers, Gary Travis and Michael January, announced a 9 million dollars suspense thriller *The Return of Norman* at the start of 1982. Despite no links with either Robert Bloch, author of the original *Psycho* novel, or Universal, who bought the rights to the 1960 film from Paramount (who, to complete the circle, had filmed it on Universal's back-lot) they were confident of success. "If this script had been written while Hitchcock was still alive, we would have offered it to him," January told *Cinefantastique* at length when the project was first revealed.

But their failure to interest any of the surviving cast members or, in an original move, the proposed hiring of Jamie Lee Curtis (Janet Leigh's daughter who supposedly said the idea was 'dumb') put the project on hold. More predictable perhaps were rumblings about copyright from both Universal and Bloch and so, undaunted, they announced that the 9 million dollar *The Return of Norman* was being rewritten (excising all copyright infringing elements) and would appear as the 10 million dollar *The Return of the Psycho* from the Striking Picture Company.

No grounds in that title for presuming a relation to either Bloch's novel or Hitchcock's classic adaption. No question of that.

Enter Robert Bloch. Angered by reports of the activities of Travis and January ("apparently these gentlemen have no realisation that there are such things as copyright laws and screen rights") and encouraged by his agent, he set to work on his own sequel, *Psycho II*. As he explains in our interview - "I began thinking about the status of violence in our society, what would old Norman think if he were suddenly released into today's world? How would he operate? And I was off and running, mentally at least." And, after more than twenty years trying to rid himself of the tag, Robert 'Psycho' Bloch was off and running, writing at least his new novel for Warner (US) and Corgi (UK) and a chance to be known in the future as Robert 'Psycho II' Bloch.

Lastly, Universal slid into action. After clearing the decks of the proposed *The Return of Norman* and rejecting Bloch's outline for a possible sequel, they gave the go-ahead for a 4 million dollar *Psycho II*, as a

co-production with Oak Communications, a cablevision TV station in America.

Filming, from a script by Tom Holland, finished last year but everyone from Australian director Richard Franklin to reunited stars Anthony Perkins and Vera Miles are keeping very quiet about the plot. However, we know at least that Bates has been released from the hospital for the criminally insane to return to the Bates Motel and that famous Victorian house on the hill. "There," says barely older-looking Perkins, "he realises he has the potential of being dangerous."

One thing is certain - this is not a cheap rip-off of the horror film that touched people even beyond the genre. Director Franklin's admiration for Hitchcock led him to the University of Southern California Film School and he claims he is "trying to make a film that recreates what I felt as a twelve year old," when he sneaked into a cinema to see *Psycho* five times. Hilton Green, producer of *Psycho II*, worked as first assistant director on *Psycho* and has tried hard to duplicate the original house. "It's an eerie thing to see the house reappear," he said, after many of the original props emerged from storage at Universal.

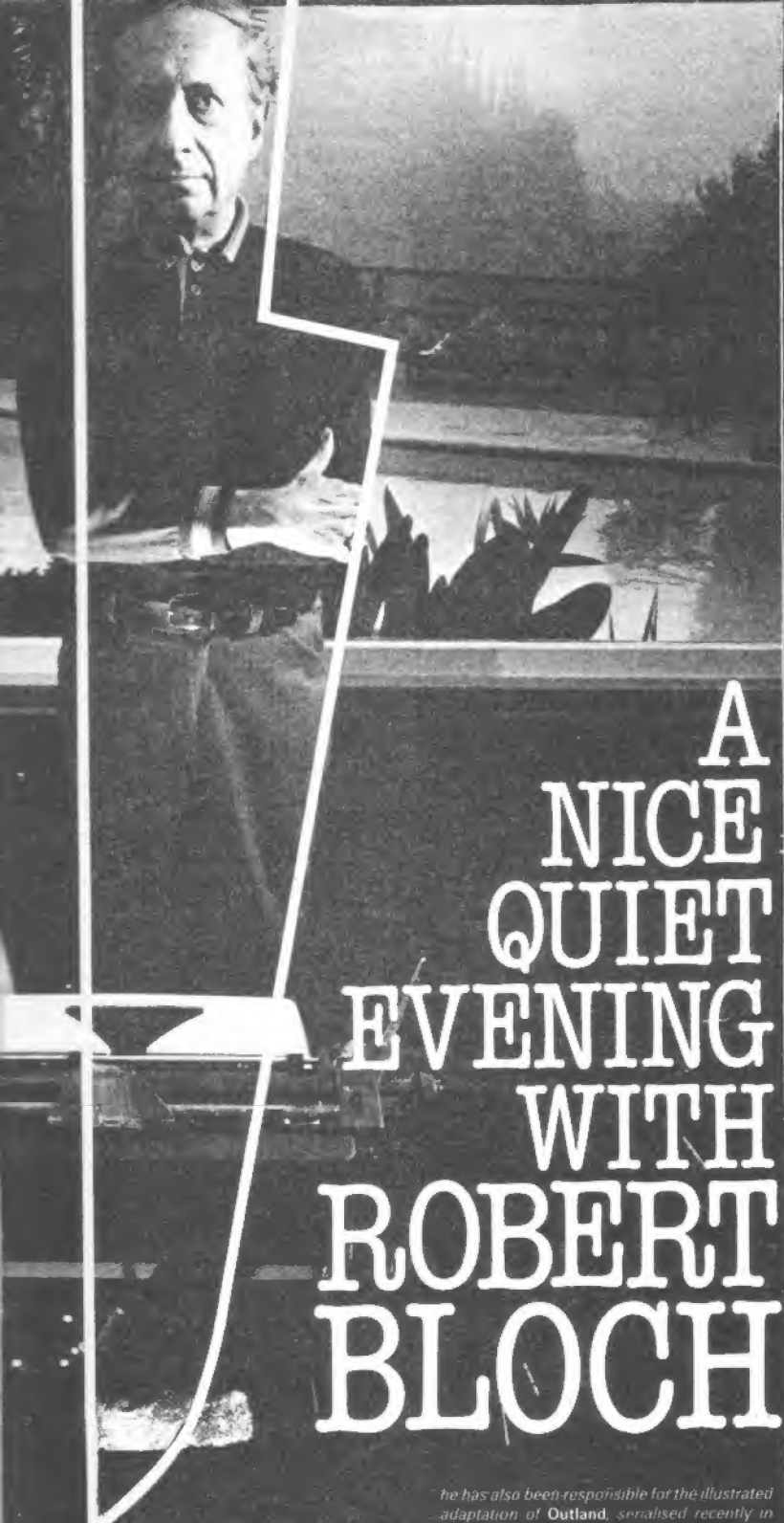
One cherished item, however, will not return. After being pressed into service for John Carpenter's *The Thing*, that famous shower head has disappeared.

So will we be afraid to go back into the shower again? Vera Miles for one is certain we'll be as terrified as we ever were: "For years movies have been trying not to duplicate *Psycho* but to out-ugly it... (we are) trying tastefully to go back to the Hitchcock



style - to put terror in the mind of the audience, not in the eye of the viewer."

The last word is Robert Bloch's, a man surprisingly cheerful about selling all screen rights to a sequel back in 1960 for a mere £5000: "I'm just glad I didn't have the victim on a toilet seat!" And on that note we invite you to an issue-length look at the work of Robert Bloch and the world of *Psycho*'s children...



A NICE QUIET EVENING WITH ROBERT BLOCH

Steranko is a familiar name among both comics fans and film buffs through his revolutionary approach to comicbook storytelling, and his American film magazine. As well as his breathtaking work on Marvel's *Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* and *Captain America* in the 1960s,

he has also been responsible for the illustrated adaptation of *Outland*, serialised recently in *Heavy Metal* magazine. His illustrations for *The Shadow* paperback covers alone make him a suitable subject for interview himself. His latest project is to create pre-production visuals for Steven Spielberg's proposed *Blackhawk* movie, based on the Quality DC comic books.

If Jack the Ripper ever needed a publicist, he would have hired Robert Bloch.

The 65-year-old author has immortalized Whitechapel's deadly denizen and dozens of other evildoers in countless tales of terror and mayhem. Fear and fury are all part of a day's work for the writer.

Bloch was born on April 5, 1917 in Chicago, the haunt of killer Herman W. Mudgett, who would later inspire Bloch's 1974 novel *American Gothic*. His bank cashier father and teacher mother eventually moved the family to Maywood, Illinois and then to Milwaukee.

At eight, Bloch encountered *The Phantom of the Opera* on the silent screen and began devouring fantasy literature in *Weird Tales* and other pulp magazines. Correspondence with modern horror master H.P. Lovecraft led to Bloch's first attempts at writing – and his first professional sale, at 17, *The Secret in the Tomb*, to *Weird Tales*.

Since then, more than 400 short stories – horror, science fiction, mystery – have emerged from his typewriter, including the classic *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper* (which prompted *Stay Tuned for Terror*, a series of Bloch-scripted radio adaptations of his own yarns). During a 12-year stint as an advertising copywriter and later, as a full-time writer based in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, Bloch perfected the novel of psychological terror (*The Scarf*, *The Kidnapper*, *Firebug*, *Night World*) and 'the Bloch ending,' a surprise finale laced with black humour.

After moving to Hollywood, Bloch began a second career scripting TV series episodes (*Thriller*, *Night Gallery*) and movies (*The Psychopath*, *Torture Garden*, *Asylum*). But, it was a film adaptation directed by Alfred Hitchcock which branded the novelist forever with the legend, 'Robert Bloch, the author of *Psycho*.' It's an emblem to which he has become accustomed and one reason that his next chiller, published by Warner Books, will be the long-awaited sequel, *Psycho II*.

The interview took place in the book-lined den of Bloch's Los Angeles home. Framed photos from his long career decorated the walls. Nowhere was there evidence that Bloch might be more than the most charming and gentle of men. After all, as he has always boasted, he does have 'the heart of a small boy' – locked safely away in the bottom drawer of his desk.

Author interview by Steranko

To contemporary readers, the name Robert Bloch conjures up images of fatal showers, crazed killers and surprise endings. Yet, you're a friendly, a soft-spoken man with a keen sense of humour, someone who wouldn't hurt a fly.

Yes, what a pity. I'm not the monster my work seems to indicate.

Are your fans disappointed?

It disappoints everybody. Whenever I try to do anything about it, my wife restrains me. I could show you the scars on that little dog there.

Please! I'm squeamish! After 48 years of creating fear and horror in print, are you pleased with the life you've led?

Oh yes! Writing for those miserable pulps opened a great many doors to me. I was always a silent film buff, but I never thought I'd meet the people I saw on the screen. Become a friend of Buster Keaton or Fritz Lang? Impossible! Write films for Joan Crawford, Barbara Stanwyck? I did. **Strait Jacket** and **The Night Walker**. It was seventh heaven for me, as a fan—and I'm still a fan. To meet the writers whose work entertained me for years, to go to conventions everywhere, France, Australia? How would these things be possible under normal circumstances? They wouldn't.

Still, working behind a typewriter can be a lonely occupation.

I always knew I was doing the wrong thing. I've been writing long enough to know what I *should* have done if I wanted to make it big. When I sold **Psycho** for a pittance, I could still have capitalized on the book by moving out here, putting myself in hock, buying a big home in Bel Air or Beverly Hills and hiring a PR man to let it be known — 'The author of **Psycho** has arrived. Kiss me!'

But, there's no such thing as being a little pregnant. I would have had to make that a way of life, at the expense of my wife, daughter and other responsibilities. I didn't see the Hollywood route as a comfortable lifestyle for me. I didn't have the personality or the physical stamina for it. It wasn't a matter of being noble, just realistic.

Just how did you make the big connection?

Psycho was sold blind in 1958 to MCA by my then-New York agent for \$95000, all rights, including sequels. Simon and Schuster got 15 per cent, my agent, 25 per cent. I was left with a gross, not a net of \$6000. Then, I learned that Alfred Hitchcock was making the film. I was delighted.

Years later, I found out from Herb Coleman, Hitch's longtime associate producer through **North by Northwest**, that Hitch had asked an MCA agent if I would be available to do the screenplay. The agent — who wanted to sell an MCA client as the writer — said, "No, Bloch's not available." So, I didn't write the script.

Eventually, you did 'go Hollywood.'

I arrived in late fall 1959 to do a trial TV show, **Lock-up**, for Ziv, a bottom-of-the-barrel syndication studio which no longer exists, with the proviso that if they liked the scripts and I got more assignments, *maybe* I'd stay out here. I did. I got other assignments, one from **Alfred Hitchcock Presents**. I

was here for two months when there was a Writer's Guild strike. So, I sat here for half-a-year writing pulp stories.

Then, I worked on scripts at Universal, and wandered onto the stage where they were shooting the **Psycho** Bates Motel sequences. Nobody knew me. I didn't speak to anyone. I wandered out again.

The first time I met Hitch was at a rough cut screening on the Universal lot. We chatted afterwards. **Psycho** is really a Paramount picture. Everybody seems to think it was a Universal film, because it was made on their lot. Paramount opposed the film, and told Hitch they didn't have any space for it. Hitch's contract gave him control of subject matter, and he wanted to make **Psycho**, but Paramount did everything possible to block the project. They hated the title, the whole concept; they *knew* it was going to be a catastrophe. They cut the budget. Hitch had to use his television cameraman, John

off in the shower, the insurance man's death as I had envisioned it, the charming mother in the fruit cellar, the final business about Norman Bates' possession by his mother, my last line, "Why, she wouldn't even harm a fly."

Knowing how things are usually tampered with in film adaptations, I was relieved and pleased by the way it was done. I had no complaints whatsoever, except, that had I done the screenplay — and it's probably just as well I didn't, since I didn't have full knowledge of working technique then — I *might* have shortened the explanatory epilogue by at least half, which wouldn't have harmed anything.

Whose idea was the superimposition — Mrs. Bates' features on Norman's face — at the end?

Obviously Hitch's idea, a great touch. The only problem I have is all the French and British exponents of the auteur theory who gush about **Psycho**. "Isn't it sooo wonderful that Hitchcock thought of killing this girl in a shower where she's sooo vulnerable? Isn't it daring of him to think that?" If they ever mention my name, it's 'This was taken from a trashy pulp magazine story'.

Hitch himself was the only one who disagreed. In **The Celluloid Muse: Hollywood Directors Speak**, in an interview with Charles Higham and Joe Greenberg, Hitch says, "**Psycho** all came from Robert Bloch's book. The scriptwriter, Joseph Stefano, a radio writer — he'd been recommended to me by my agents, MCA — contributed dialogue mostly, *no ideas*." I'm satisfied by that statement. I just wish that some auteur theorists had bothered to read that interview, because I'm constantly badgered with the question, "Hitchcock wrote **Psycho**, didn't he? *Then*, you adapted it into a novel."

If that was so, you wouldn't have chopped off her head.

That was for dramatic effect. Writers, for the most part, didn't do gross things in those days. You could zing the readers with one line, then get out, instead of going into the murder sequence. They would share the heroine's shock that this was actually happening. It seemed to be a feasible method of disposing of her so as to shock readers with the event's sheer abruptness and to make them wonder where the story was going to go from there.

***Psycho** was inspired by the Ed Gein murders...*

Yes, but there's a neat distinction. It was inspired by the murders, *not* by Ed Gein, murderer. I was sitting in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, a town so small that if you sneezed on the north side, somebody on the south side said 'Gesundheit'. Everybody knew everyone else's business. Some 40-odd miles away in an even smaller town, Plainfield, on a Saturday morning, some-

"Robert Bloch is perhaps the finest psychological horror writer working today" — Stephen King.

Russell, and shoot in black-and-white, without his usual Cary Grants or Jimmy Stewarts.

I'm so glad.

So was he, I found out. He agreed with me that colour was wrong for **Psycho**.

What was your first response to that rough cut?

When Hitch asked me, I said, "I think it's either going to be your biggest hit or your biggest disaster."

How did you feel about the changes in your material?

Very pleased. I could see why he had altered Norman Bates' age. Originally, Bates was a middle-aged, unattractive man. That would have tipped off the audience at once. You couldn't put Rod Steiger in that role and do it successfully on screen. I understood why certain scenes that I deleted or described in a few brief lines were expanded into full sequences. And, I could see why instead of having the young lady's head chopped off in the shower, Hitch had her stabbed. No decapitations in those days; I wouldn't have wanted that anyway. Too messy.

The story, the characters, plot twists were all mine. There was my heroine getting killed

body walked into Gein's shed and discovered a woman hung in the rafters dressed like a deer. The police arrested Gein, and suspected he may have murdered others, too. That's all our little weekly paper said, because it was not their habit to badmouth small-town living.

I knew very little about the Gein case *per se*, and nothing whatsoever about him, except he was a 42-year-old man, a respected citizen for his entire life. He had been a babysitter; he gave people little gifts. He had apparently been killing women for some time; there was talk on the local radio station about digging up graves. I was amazed that Gein could conduct himself without *anyone* suspecting the truth. I said, "There's a book here!"

It started me thinking. I tried to figure out what kind of man could get away with murder, to develop a pattern for this imaginary character. I decided he was probably schizoid. It would be more plausible if he himself *didn't* know what he was doing. What would motivate him? I came up with the Qedipal situation and the transvestite thing, which was pretty offbeat at the time.

How did you develop that idea?

My feeling was that if he was going to unconsciously impersonate his mother, he'd go all the way. It was also a useful device in the mystification of the plot. If Norman believes his mother is alive and other people see evidence of that, then, the reader will believe it, too. It worked.

Years later, Anthony Boucher wanted me to do a fact crime piece on the Gein case for the *Mystery Writers of America*. In my research, I discovered, to my surprise, that Gein was schizoid, that he *had* a mother fixation, that he *had* lost his mother—I don't know if he dug her up again and stuck her in the cellar—and that he was a transvestite. However, he didn't wear his mother's clothes. He went Norman one better; Gein wore strips of skin and breasts cut from his victims. He also indulged in necrophilia, cannibalism, and a few other 'isms' that weren't in the province of my character—and wouldn't have been very popular with readers in the '50s.

The facts were amazing. They even horrified me a little. 'I'm not going to look in mirrors for awhile. How can I come up with something which so closely parallels reality? What kind of sickie am I?' Of course, I've been many sickies in my life, because I always impersonate the characters I write about—good, bad or indifferent. That's the *only* writing technique I have. In my own mind, I try to impersonate the characters: How would this one speak? How would they act? What would he or she do under these circumstances? How would he rationalize his behaviour? It's acting.

You've always been fascinated, as many people are, with mass murders—Gein, the Cleveland Torso Killer, Jack the Ripper, of course—and Herman Mudgett, the insurance fraud killer, the basis of American Gothic.

Yes, I researched Mudgett, aka H.H. Holmes, discovering there were so many weird, inexplicable things about his exploits that I couldn't use them all in the novel. Nobody would believe it.

Bear in mind, I was born in Chicago. My parents told me about H.H. Holmes, who had been an active member of the community when they were children. So, I was doubly interested. Fortunately, I didn't throw out my notes, because I'm doing a book-length non-fiction account of the actual Holmes case for *Readers' Digest Books' Tales of the Uncanny*, to be published in 1983. Now, I can use all the bizarre facts, and get to the heart of the matter, so to speak.

After the initial news reports of the Gein case, did your plotline just fall into place?



It seemed to go—as the old dirty joke has it—"Ker-plunk!" The total elapsed time between first inspiration and final perspiration was about seven weeks. In those days, I could write much quicker. Of course, I had no interference whatsoever, living in Weyauwega, Wisconsin. No night life. No day life, either. I'd stay at that typewriter from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm.

Were any scenes in particular tough to write?

It was a comparatively easy book. Several of my then-correspondents were aware that I was writing another novel and asked, "Will you sell it to the movies?" I wrote back to one and all, "This one would *never* be made into a movie!"

Had Hollywood optioned any other Bloch work at that time?

No. *Psycho* was the first.

You must have had hundreds of offers to do Psycho II during the last 20 years.

Never! Not one person ever came to me and said, "Do *Psycho II*," except Kirby McCauley, my present agent.

It seems like such a natural idea. Why wait until now?

I had thought of it, but I didn't bring the idea up, because I had no particular financial

Godfather II and *What-Have-You II*. Obvious! But why should I do it? Then, Kirby said, "I will get you an offer you cannot refuse. You'll make enough money on the book so you can forget about film rights." I said, "All right, bring in some offers, and I'll be happy to write it, because I have some ideas."

Psycho II was something I very much wanted to do. I got hooked on the project itself. It kept nagging at me, and I began to evolve a plan that would make it work in my mind, to justify doing it at all. The sequel has a great deal more comment on our times than *Psycho* did. You see, for the past decade, I've been constantly asked, "Well, what do you think about violence?"

Many people point to *Psycho* as one of the seminal sources of today's violent films. Yet, in terms of actual visual violence, it's quite mild, violence by inference. That knife never goes into flesh. The most graphically violent episode is Arbogast's staircase fall, but even that is usually topped in the first 30 seconds in all of today's alleged horror films. Lovely crimson gore. First, the man's chest opens. Now, his head explodes. Where do you go from here?

So, I began thinking about the status of violence in society. What would old Norman think if he were suddenly released into today's world? How would he operate? And I was off and running, mentally at least.

You let Norman Bates out?

Norman Bates is loose again, providing me with a nice way of expressing my thoughts on violence without lecturing. It's a wonderful opportunity to go along with Norman and see how different things have become. *Psycho II* is essentially a science fiction novel—no one will realize that unless they remember I said it here—set in a parallel universe. It is Norman Bates' world. There is no movie called *Psycho* there.

Have you seen the new spate of horror flicks?

Not if I'm warned in advance about anything that is unduly nauseating. I don't see many of these films, because I'm squeamish. I don't like the sight of blood—it's unpleasant. Most of them don't horrify me. I don't think they're all that innovative or creative. These things were being done at Auschwitz long before most of these auteurs were born. Anybody who had any training, even in a minor capacity at Belsen, could come up with even more horrifying, nauseating gimmicks to employ in a movie.

There is a difference between horror and entertainment.

It's very easy to shock someone, but there incentive to do so. Not having screen rights, I didn't write it earlier, because *why* should I write something for free? I'm not so stupid that I didn't see the handwriting on the privy wall ten years ago, with *Jaws II*, *The*

are different ways to shock.

Does Psycho II have the original's shock value?

We'll see. Things have to be done in a different way to catch readers by surprise these days, because they have been subjected to so many reiterations. There have been other victims trapped in showers and dispatched by transvestite murderers.

Did you feel intimidated? Readers will expect you to top your own classic.

I don't have that particular bugaboo. I sit down with an idea, try to develop it the best way I can, figure out how I can hook the reader and carry him along. Initially, the idea has to be there. But I wasn't psyching myself up with this one, that this has to out-psycho *Psycho*, that I owe it to myself, the readers and the viewers. That's where many sequels fail. In their efforts to top themselves, they move in another direction and inject added elements on the theory that if one is good, ten is better. They lose sight of the original, while hiding behind a successful title with a Roman numeral added.

Then, Psycho II is a natural extension of the first book's events.

Not really. I prefer to think of it as an unnatural extension of events.

What do you consider to be the story's essential elements? Is Norman Bates back at a motel – or somewhere else?

Both. He is now forced to operate within the extended ground rules of today's society. People aren't so gullible; he has to be more clever. It takes place in 1981. Norman is older. The years have gone by. He's been in the nut factory, where he learned a few tricks.

The horror genre is currently very hot. Have you read Peter Straub and Stephen King?

Certainly. I know them, read them constantly, and blurbed both of their first books. I'm very fond of their work.

They are almost literary superstars ...

I have a philosophical attitude. Let's say, for the sake of argument, that the horror film vogue had ensued in the early '70s, but that I had not written *Psycho* until that time – instead of the late '50s. A dozen years would have made a tremendous difference, because, by then, there was a precedent for the million dollar film sale or the million dollar advance for paperback rights to an unknown writer – even in the genre. I came along at the wrong time. They weren't doing it then, so I didn't get it. By the time they were, I was old hat, passe, and the action went to the kids. It's been true in science fiction, and across-the-board, *Animal House* or George Lucas' projects. Now, when you get \$20 to \$30 million to spend on a film, you look around for someone who's 20 or 30 to execute it.

During the Depression, the advantage was

to be, if not old, at least middle-aged. Then, the older, experienced people got the jobs, kids weren't wanted. Now, as I approach the other end of the spectrum, old people are swept under the rug in favour of kids. It's just a matter of timing, a condition under which one lives and must adapt to as best one can. I have no desire to live a different life, and if I had to live it over again, I don't think I'd choose to be old in the '30s and young in the '80s, even if I could figure out how to do it.

Hindsight is the working tool ...

For every protologist.

If you had written Psycho in the '70s, you probably wouldn't have had Hitchcock and Bernard Herrmann in glorious black-and-white. It would have been a colour quickie directed by Roger Corman. Just another movie.

Absolutely.

With Psycho II ready to be unleashed, do you have any other projects in the works?

I have an inability to think of more than one thing at a time. I've never been able to juggle a variety of projects or ideas at one time. Whatever I'm working on is what I'm working on. Only when I lay it aside, am I able to work on something new. That's one of the disadvantages of not having two heads. I have completed an untitled suspense novel that I'll submit to a publisher soon, but beyond that, I have no idea what I'll be doing next. Something will come along. It always has.

I imagine you'll be writing to the bittersweet end.

I certainly hope not!

What would you do instead?

I would read, perhaps get back to painting, and depending on my financial situation, travel.

What would you like your epitaph to read?

My epitaph? I'm not going to have one, because I'm not going to have a tombstone, because I'm not going to have a grave.

No grave? Why?

Because for the last umpteen years, I have been sending my material, at their request, to the University of Wyoming. So, they have all of my material, and when the time comes, they'll also have me.

You're going to be stuffed, mounted and on display in the library?

No way. I don't want to encourage people with darts. Seriously, I'll be in one of those little urns which looks like a book.

Not one they can check out for two weeks!

No. My urn will say *The Collected Works of Robert Bloch*.

A final Bloch collection.

My only regret is that I can't persuade fellow celebrities, like Barbara Stanwyck and others, to do this. I would love to see Penny Singleton's cremated remains at the University labelled, 'A Penny saved is a Penny urned.'

THE FILMS OF ROBERT BLOCH

Notes

1. Bloch has also written an unused screenplay *The Twenty-First Witch*.

2. He made a cameo appearance in *The Couch*; in *How to Commit a Movie Murder*, a trailer for *Straight-Jacket* with Castle and Crawford; and in *Experiment in Nightmare*, a five minute publicity tie-in for *The Night Walker*, also starring Castle and hypnotist Pat Collins.

3. He also has over thirty credits for TV; most notable for *Lock-up*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Star Trek* and *Night Gallery* and most recently for *Darkroom*.

Psycho (1960)

Anthony Perkins (as *Norman Bates*), John Gavin (as *Sam Loomis*), Janet Leigh (as *Marion Crane*), Vera Miles (as *Lila Crane*), John McIntyre (as *Sheriff Chambers*), Martin Balsam (as *Milton Arbogast*).
Prod/Dir: **Alfred Hitchcock**, Scr: **Joseph Stefano** from the novel by **Robert Bloch**, Ph: **John L. Russell**, Ed: **George Tomasini**, Mus: **Bernard Herrman**.
Paramount, 109 mins.

The Couch (1960)

Grant Williams, Shirley Knight, Onslow Stevens, William Leslie, Anne Helm and Hope Summers.
Prod/Dir: **Owen Crump**, Scr: **Robert Bloch** from a story by **Blake Edwards** and **Owen Crump**.
Warner Brothers, 100 mins.

The Cabinet of Caligari (1961)

Caligari (credited as "*Himself*"), Dan O'Herlihy (as *Paul*), Glynis Johns (as *Jane Lindstrom*), Dick Davelos (as *Mark*), Lawrence Dobkin (as *David*), Constance Ford (as *Christine*).
Prod/Dir: **Roger Kay**, Scr: **Robert Bloch** (suggested by **Robert Wiene's 1919 The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari**), Ph: **John Russell**, Ed: **Archie Marshek**, Mus: **Gerald Fried**.
Twentieth Century Fox, 105 mins.

Straight-Jacket (1963)

Joan Crawford (as *Lucy Harbin*), Diane Baker (as *Carol*), Lief Erickson (as *Bill Cutler*), Howard St. John (as *Raymond Fields*), John Anthony Hayes (as *Michael Fields*), Rochelle Hudson (as *Emily Cutler*).
Prod/Dir: **William Castle**, Scr: **Robert Bloch**, Ph: **Arthur Arling**, Ed: **Edwin Bryant**, Mu: **Ven Alexander**.
Columbia, 93 mins.

The Night Walker (1964)

Robert Taylor (as *Howard Trent*), Barbara Stanwyck (as *Irene Trent*), Hayden Rorke (as *Barry Morland*), Rochelle Hudson (as *Hilda*), Judith Meredith (as *Joyce*), Lloyd Bochner (as *The Dream*) with *The Nightmare*.
Prod/Dir: **William Castle**, Scr: **Robert Bloch**, Ph: **Harold Stine**, Ed: **Edwin Bryant**, Mu: **Vic Mizzy**.
Universal, 86 mins.

The Cat Creature (1973)

Meredith Baxter (as *Rina Carter*), David Hedison (as *Roger Edmonds*), Gale Sondergaard (as *Hester Black*), John Carradine (as *Hotel Clerk*), Stuart Whitman (as *Lieut. Marco*), Renee Jarrett (as *Sherry Hastings*), Kent Smith (as *Frank Lucas*), Keysa Luke (as *Joe Sung*), Peter Lorre Jr (as *Pawnshop Clerk*).
Prod: **Douglas S. Cramer**, Dir: **Curtis Harrington**, Scr: **Robert Bloch** from a story by **Cramer**, **Wilford Lloyd Baumes** and **Bloch**, Ph: **Charles Rosher**, Ed: **Stan Ford**, Mus: **Leonard Rosenman**.
Screen Gems/Columbia, 90 mins. TV Movie.

The Dead Don't Die (1974)

George Hamilton (as *Don Drake*), Ray Milland (as *Jim Moss*), Linda Cristal (as *Vera LaValle*), Ralph Meeker (as *Lieut. Reardon*), James McEachin (as *Frankie Specht*), Joan Blondell (as *Levenia*), Reggie Nadel (as *Perdido*), Jerry Douglas (as *Ralph Drake*), Milton Parsons (as *Undertaker*).
Prod: **Henry Colman**, Dir: **Curtis Harrington**, Scr: **Robert Bloch**, Ph: **James Crane**, Ed: **Ronald Fagan**, Mus: **Robert Prince**.
Douglas S. Cramer Co. 90 mins. TV Movie.



Above: Gale Sondergaard and Meredith Baxter in the 1973 TV movie *The Cat Creature*.
Below: Poster for *Psycho's* New York 1960 premiere.

If you're afraid
of the things
that can come
out of YOUR
DREAMS....

LUST,
MURDER,
SECRET
DESIRES...

WILLIAM CASTLE WARNS YOU... DON'T SEE...



THE NIGHT
WALKER

No one... BUT NO ONE... will be admitted to the theatre
after the start of each performance of **PSYCHO**.



A new kind of drama and
excitement from the screen
master of suspense...
as his cameras move
into the icy blackness
of the unexplored!



ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S



* This is to help you enjoy *PSYCHO* more
By the way, after you see the picture,
please don't give away the ending.
It's the only one we have.

STARTS
TOMORROW
AT 2 THEATRES

The DE MILLE

BARONET

ANTHONY
PERKINS
VERA
MILES
JOHN
GAVIN
MARTIN
BALSAM
JOHN
MCINTYRE

JANET
LEIGH
MARTIN
CRANE

ALFRED
HITCHCOCK
Screenplay by
JOSEPH
STEFANO
Based on the
Novel by
Robert Bloch
Paramount

PSYCHO STABBING -THE TRUTH



Classic corner time again. More than twenty years after the original blood-curdling *Psycho*, *HoH* brings you the rarely-seen story-board of cinema's most grisly and realistic horror murder. Plus, as an added bonus, the answer to the most common question about that shower stabbing ... Who actually directed the sequence? Alfred Hitchcock ... or Saul Bass? Tony Crawley brings you the definitive answer.



This is the most imitated killing in movies. Whether in straight drama, cop-art, Westerns or horror films. This is the definitive cause (*celebre*) of all the screen's slayings in the bathroom—where the shiny, often bright white porcelain surrounds make a perfect (and so slippery) background for red blood, spurting, dripping, congealing...

This, of course, is Janet Leigh (and her double) in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, 1960.

"Normally," says Hitch, "any studio would have made her the love interest. I wanted to shock the audience—bumping her off early." Cue for his also much-copied gimmick that "no one, but no one" be allowed to enter the cinema after the film had begun unreeing.

But a major controversy still reigns around this classic murder sequence. And one far more important than was it ketchup or chocolate sauce doubling for the blood swirling down the bath-tub's drain. Quite simply, this query is: who really masterminded and directed the stabbing of Janet Leigh?

In his master book on *The Master* (Hitchcock; Secker and Warburg) French director François Truffaut, an acknowledged Hitch-buff, likened the killing to a rape and Hitchcock told him how the sequence was shot.

Or, how he remembered it. Or, at least, how he wanted it to be remembered...



THE HITCHCOCK VERSION.

"It took us seven days... there were 70 camera set-ups for 45 seconds of footage. We had a torso specially made up... with the blood that was supposed to spurt away from the knife, but I didn't use it. I used a live girl instead, a naked model who stood in for Janet Leigh. We only showed Miss Leigh's hands, shoulders and head. All the rest was the stand-in.

"Naturally, the knife never touched the body; it was all done in the montage. I shot some of it in slow motion so as to cover the breasts. The slow shots were not accelerated later on... they were inserted in the montage so as to give an impression of normal speed."

That's all well and good and quite technical. At the time most people, like a

kid actor in one of Hitchcock's films, only wanted to know... 'c'mon, was it chocolate sauce?"

The more vital truth of the matter—one of the best kept secrets in movie history—is that Hitchcock did not direct the sequence at all. Saul Bass did and he has never officially been credited for anything else other than choreographing the scene... until now.

In order to plan the shock murder, step by bloody step, Hitchcock called upon the services of the veteran graphic designer, Saul Bass—until *Psycho*, better known for his remarkable new genre of credit-titles; mainly for Otto Preminger movies: *Carmen Jones*, *Advise and Consent*, *Exodus*, etc. Indeed, all the winning main-title formats of the last twenty years or so (particularly the 007 titles) were greatly influenced by Saul's initial and quite revolutionary switch from the conventional roll of names, or worse still, those campy, fluttering pages of a book, featuring all the film's stars and technicians.

Two years after *Psycho*, Bass directed one set of titles which proved a hundred per cent better than the film they were fronting: the memorable black cat on the prow for *Walk on the Wild Side*.

And so, Saul Bass it was who storyboarded the *Psycho* stabbing.

And he also directed the sequence on a closed set with Hitchcock in close and constant attendance. It was his directing debut.

"He was very nice about it," says Bass. "I thought it was a generous thing for him to do on his picture. I learned a lot from it and very nice things emerged from it."

No credit, though. Or none beyond that for "title-design".

THE BASS VERSION

There were two cuts that Hitch added when I was through. We were on the stage three or four days, then I sat down with George Tomasini, the editor, and together we edited the footage. When we were through, Hitch added two cuts. A shot of the knife going into her belly—done in reverse. And some blood splattering. He felt it was too bloodless.

"I thought it would be interesting to do a bloodless murder, with only blood at the end, going down the drain. With all the water from the shower, the blood might—or might not—have been washed away immediately. Could have worked either way. Hitch felt he needed the blood, so he added the cuts." And yes, the blood was chocolate sauce. And the worst problem Bass had to contend with.

"Originally, I planned the pullaway from the dead eye (see storyboard) with a little trickle of blood coming out from under the face and moving towards the camera—with the camera pulling away in sort of retreat. So we built a special tiled floor sorta buckled it to create an imperceptible depression through

which we could direct the route of the blood and stuff. It didn't work!

"We worked at it like forever and finally gave it up and did just the straight pullaway from where she drapes over the floor." So now you know!

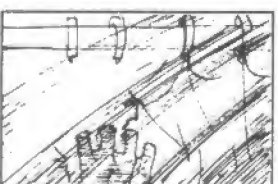
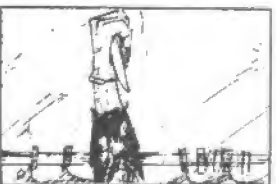
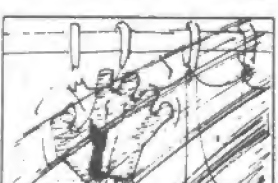
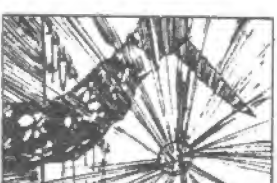
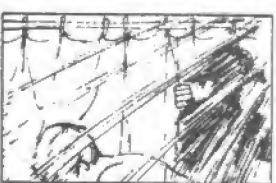
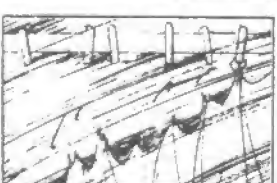
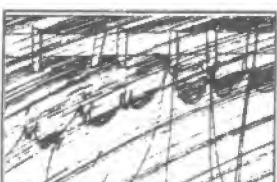
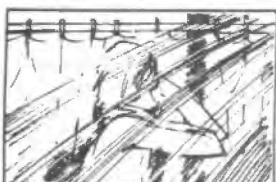
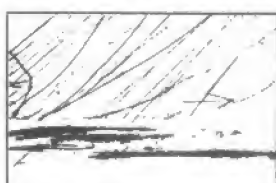
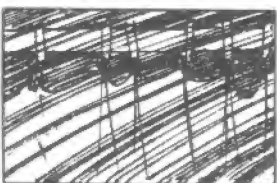
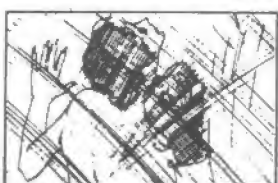
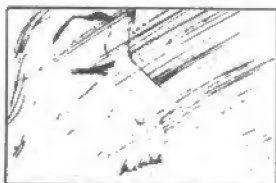


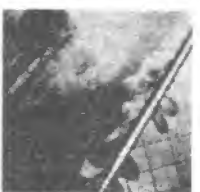
Uncredited. Saul Bass, the quiet man behind the *Psycho* stabbing, remains cool and far from annoyed about never being credited for his direction of the sequences. Instead, he's grateful still to Hitchcock for the opportunity, which indeed led to more direct filming: exquisite shorts for the New York World's Fair; much of the *Spartacus* battles; the split-screening in *Grand Prix*; and his first feature, *Phase IV*, a winning sf look at ants, made in Britain, 1972.

But it's his credit-title revolution that Saul is always to be remembered—and thanked—for. Beginning with work for Otto Preminger, he designed logo-symbols for films—the flaming rose of *Carmen Jones*, 1954, to the Reubenish thighs of *Such Good Friends*, 1971. These movie trade-marks soon utilised and animated in his title-designs, also include the segmented corpse of *Anatomy of a Murder*; the flip-top Capitol lid of *Advise and Consent*; the angular arm with clawing fingers of *The Man With The Golden Arm*. This arm, always outstretched, became his pet theme: brandishing a sword, *Spartacus*; rifles, *Exodus*; three balloons, *One, Two, Three*; in a US naval sleeve for *In Harm's Way*; and protruding from a globe, firmly latched on to a bagful of dollars for *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. His greatest, longest and most expensive animated titles (£20,000 for six minutes) came with the epilogue for *Around The World in 80 Days*.

Later on, he began shooting special footage for his titles. A maze of frenzied streets for *Something Wild*; a stagecoach rolling through *The Big Country*; Hitler dancing for *The Victors*; and years ahead of its time—and equipment—the famous helicopter opening, sweeping right down to the flicking finger in *West Side Story*... where he had the actual credits chalked up on a wall.

His coda: "I'm making the audience expectant... I try to reach for a simple visual phrase that tells you what the picture is about. It's no use going mad with the full, fireworks treatment just because you like the idea yourself. No matter how good, how brilliant an idea may be, if it doesn't blend with the film there's only one thing to do—throw it away. OK, file it, if you wish, for future use. But lose it now. Get rid of it. And start again."





Dear Dez,
Pleased as punch to see **Halls of Horror** on sale, even if it is just a winter special and I'll have to wait a while for the regular magazine.

It's only fitting that this should be a Brian Lewis issue. Not only because of the standard of his work, but because he contributed so much to the look of **HoH** during its too brief first incarnation.

I still remember buying the first issue of **HoH** all those years ago. It led to me trying other magazines dealing with fantasy films. I was very disappointed when it ceased publication, even though you came back with **Starburst**.

However like all good or bad creatures of the night, **HoH** rises from the grave. Now we can enjoy **Starburst** and **Halls of Horror**. Whether **HoH** features comic strips and articles, or just articles, I look forward to buying it regularly and wish you the best of luck.

B. Georgiou, 136 Bellingham Road, Catford, London.

Dear Dez,
Delighted to see my all-time favourite movie magazine **HoH** back on the stands again.

After your having gone on to start **Starburst** and **Dr. Who Weekly** I had almost given up hope of seeing the **Brides of Dracula** strip promised in **HoH23** - I hope the standard of illustration and writing in the re-launched **HoH** will be up to the very high standard set previously by John Brosnan, Tise Vahimagi and the rest.

Best wishes and continued success for the future of **HoH**.

Gordon Rodden, 41 Haddington Place, Edinburgh.

Dear Dez,
Firstly, let me say how sorry I am that one of Britain's finest artists has passed away. The beautiful paintings rendered by the late Brian Lewis have graced many covers of **Halls of Horror** (also **House of Hammer**) and his comic art was always immaculate, to say the least. Though he is gone, he has left behind many examples of his fine work for his fans to admire for years to come.

Let me also express my joy at the return of **HoH** through Quality Magazines and for this, I really cannot put into words how sincerely happy this has made me. With good ol' Dez Skinn at the editorial helm once more, it can only remain the success it has been since the beginning. However, it clearly states on the contents page of volume two, number twelve (24), that **HoH** will only be published quarterly.

Quarterly? You mean, only four times per year? Please go back to the regular monthly frequency where you left off. Many fans will be pleased at the long overdue return of **HoH** but practically all of them will most certainly be disappointed if the magazine only appears every three months. Once again, I implore you to go monthly and I feel certain that I

speak for most readers who enjoy this excellent British publication.

Thank you for reprinting "Highway of Hell" and "Malvoisin's Mirror" as well as the adaptation of **The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires** as these appeared in issues of **HoH** which are now virtually unobtainable. And of course, all of the comic strips were drawn by the inimitable Brian Lewis whose artwork on "Seven Golden Vampires" and "The Curse of Cormac" took advantage of each gruesome incident to good effect.

The main reason that I am a big fan of **HoH** is due to the fact that it had a wider scope than most other magazines dealing with the severely maligned horror genre. It featured reviews of movies both old and new, and included articles on all the new releases and little-seen chillers without missing any out and without going overboard on the older horror films (charming though they were). Above all, it was intelligent and expressive, with some film criticisms being a source of argument between fans and causing a stir in the *Post Mortem* column. When the magazine apparently folded without warning at issue twenty-three, I greatly missed the reviews that you could have bestowed upon such films as **Halloween**; **Zombies**; **Dawn of the Dead**; **Zombie Flesh-Eaters**; **Phantasm**; **The Fog**; **Friday the 13th**; **Foltergeist**; **Creepshow** and even some of the films that didn't reach our shores, such as **Maniac**; **The Beast Within**; **Final Exam** and **The Coming**. With your return, I sincerely hope that your informative reviews will be back in time for **Halloween 3**; **Season of the Witch**; **Friday the 13th Part 3** in 3-D; **Psycho 2**; **The Sender**; and **The Evil Dead**. In other words, I can't wait to see if you try a new approach or stick with the old. Either way, you'll have a million fans like myself.

Finally, I sincerely hope that **HoH** does go monthly. I only ask that my plea does not end up in the waste paper basket and I, for one, will wait with bated breath to hear what you have to say about this in the next issue of **HoH**.

Best of luck and long may you prosper.
Gary Palmer, 21 Gray Avenue, Murton, Seaham, Co. Durham.

Dear Mr. Skinn,
At last! After 4½ years of waiting, the second volume of **HoH** is completed! I must say I had given up hope of ever seeing any more of **HoH** and so I was astonished to see the title back in the newsagents after all this time. It may masquerade as a Winter Special and have no number on the cover, but open it up, and quite evidently, there is "Vol 2 No 12". However, I must immediately ask to what end **HoH** has been resurrected? Can it be merely as an 'All-Comics' reprint, parasitising its former glory? More than anything else **HoH24** seems like a wrap-up issue rather than a fresh start auguring well for a second run. Where is the editorial? Where the photos? Where the film reviews? There is not even a word as

to what **HoH** is, was, and is (one hopes) going to be again.

A Winter Special it may claim to be, but inside are the words 'published quarterly'. Can we expect a return to the original format in future issues or has that gone the way of Hammer films? I liked **HoH** for its film re-vIEWS, filmographies, articles on horror themes (e.g. *Lost World* movies), the excellent front cover art, the *Horror of Hammer* series, *Answer Desk* and general attention to detail and consistency throughout. I was particularly disappointed to see the *History of Hammer* series cut short at 1965 and I hope this will be completed in the new **HoH**.

I realise that much of the old magazine is now incorporated into **Starburst** and (I imagine) **Monster Monthly** while US magazines like **Starlog** and **Fangoria** get pretty good distribution now. This certainly makes it hard for **HoH** to survive in its old format but since you are using the old title it seems a pity not to follow it through with the contents. There is a further problem, of course, in that most of your old regular writers are now firmly established in other, similar magazines, most prominently **Starburst** (though, of course, this was originally the companion publication to **HoH**).

I noted above that you kept the title though without the possessive 'Hammer's' which is nevertheless displayed on the cover no less than 8 times! Incidentally, **HoH** must hold the record for the number of title changes it has gone through (three with **HoH24**!) and I've always wondered what was wrong with **House of Horror**, much more alliteratively satisfying than **Halls of Horror**!

Finally, since I finished a letter to the original **HoH** with a wish that it remain a Top Seller it only seems right that I now hope it will stay a Quality magazine!
Nicholas Haysom, 3 Courtenay Drive, Emmer Green, Reading

I would imagine the appearance of this issue answers most of your questions, Nicholas. We decided that as most of our old contributors are still writing for **Starburst**, we needed a different slant to **HoH**. Hence the appearance of such new old names as authors Ramsey Campbell and Michel Parry. The irrepresable Tony Crawley has promised/threatened to continue his Media Macabre column of news and views, which will be back with us next issue.

The frequency of publication rests as much with you as it does with us. While we don't want to leap to a monthly schedule and have to pad out our pages with lengthy scathing reviews of films not worth mentioning in the first place, if the demand is for a higher frequency, we will gladly bow to it and then wonder how.

We look forward to your letters.

Dez Skinn/Publisher

THE SPAWN OF PSYCHO

A Search for the Roots
of Splatter Among the
Madmen of the Movies
by Michel Parry

Michel Parry is a noted authority on the horror film and his interest in the field has taken him from horror anthologies and horror film novelisations to work within the industry. His latest screen credit was for the original story for Harry Bromley Davenport's *Xtro* (1983).

It's become fashionable of late for film buffs and even filmmakers to single out Hitchcock's **Psycho** (1960) as the precursor and model for the recent deluge of movies about maniacs with sharp implements hacking up lots of people, usually teenagers, in gory and detailed fashion. References to **Psycho**'s famous shower murder crop up in films as varied as **He Knows You're Alone** (1980), **Fade to Black** (1980), **My Bloody Valentine** (1981) and **The Funhouse** (1980) — not forgetting Brian De Palma's **Dressed to Kill** (1980), which is a virtual recycling of **Psycho**. Italian filmmaker Lucio Fulci (**Zombie Flesh Eaters** etc) has even claimed that his repulsive hard gore **New York Ripper** (1982) ('Slashing up Women was his Pleasure') is an *homage* to Hitch!

While there's no denying that **Psycho** was a breakthrough horror movie which has had enormous influence on the genre, we ought also to remember that there is not much actual physical violence in the film, nor a great deal of blood either. As Robert Bloch, author of the original novel on which Hitchcock's film is based, has pointed out, the violence was largely inferred and even the film's most violent scene — the staircase slaying of detective Arbogast — is usually topped in the first seconds of one of today's gruesomely explicit *splatter* movies. As far as screen gore is concerned, Hammer Films were certainly far more influential in breaching the taste-barrier with their fifties *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* films.

The theme of the mad killer was hardly original either, with many film precedents going all the way back to the silent classic **The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari** (1919). (Interesting that when **Caligari** was remade in 1962, the screenwriter assigned was ... Robert Bloch!) Where Hitchcock was to prove influential was in setting his gothic horror story in a realistic and credible modern America; in creating a brooding atmosphere of suspenseful anticipation; in linking illicit sex with violent death (anticipating **Halloween**, **Friday the 13th** etc); and, above all, in *shocking* his audience with the unexpected — both the film's murders catch the audience unawares, especially the killing of Janet Leigh, billed as the star and not unnaturally expected to last beyond the first 20 minutes. In the context of 1960, **Psycho** was a rare exercise in audience manipulation and misdirection: it worked on audiences the way a new germ strain spreads through an unprotected populace. Yet it's interesting to speculate that **Psycho** might never had been made but for the success of a French chiller made five years previously.

Henri Georges Clouzot's **Diabolique** (**The Fiends**) (1955) was the original of all those movies where someone is trying to drive someone else nuts by means of all kinds of weird, apparently supernatural goings-on. In particular it boasts a celebrated shock scene where a 'corpse'

suddenly rises up out of the bathwater. The film was an international smash, even in the hard-to-crack American market. There can be little doubt that Hitchcock must have seen it, and, if he *did* see it, it must inevitably have occurred to him that a home-grown Hollywood-style thriller delivering the same kind of shocks (but substituting, say ... *showers* for bathtubs) was bound to do even better business. Certainly this was the thought that occurred to an ambitious, newly-independent producer called William Castle. When Castle found himself having to wait in line for hours to see **Diabolique**, he astutely realised that the crowds were not being drawn by the unknown French cast but by the promise of being shocked and scared. The shocks *were* the star attractions! Which was just as well because Castle couldn't afford big-name stars anyway. Thus motivated, he quickly produced **Macabre** (1956) and followed that success with another shocker in the **Diabolique** vein: **The House on Haunted Hill** (1957).

It is less likely but not inconceivable that Hitchcock would also have seen Michael Powell's fascinating **Peeping Tom** (1959), made one year before **Psycho**. After all, Powell was (and still is) widely regarded as one of Britain's most important filmmakers. Like **Psycho**'s Norman Bates, Mark Lewis (Karl Boehm) in **Peeping Tom** is sexually repressed, a voyeur and a killer of women. Additionally, both men have been tainted by the negative influence of a domineering parent (in Mark's case, his father). The approach of the two films is quite different, however. **Peeping Tom** is a sympathetic character study of the killer (recalling Fritz Lang's **M** (1931)) and is seen from his perspective, whereas in **Psycho**, the story unfolds largely through the eyes of Norman's potential victims. Powell's film, arguably the more sophisticated of the two, is a case history and, as such, doesn't attempt the kind of surprise shocks that had audiences flocking to **Psycho**.

The commercial success of **Psycho** (it cost \$800,000 and soon grossed over \$15M) naturally prompted a rash of imitations. Quick off the mark, predictably, was William Castle with **Homicidal** (1961), taking as his point of departure the transvestite element in **Psycho**. A beautiful but strange young woman offers a hotel bellboy \$2,000 if he'll marry her at midnight. The ceremony duly takes place in the home of Justice of the Peace Adirms, a man with a weight problem. As the fat man reaches out to kiss the bride, she suddenly plunges a butcher knife into his stomach. Blood soaks the dying man's shirt as the mystery woman escapes into the night ... Suspicion for the motiveless murder eventually falls on a girl called Emily, who works for one Warren Webster and his half-sister, Miriam. Warren can't believe Emily is responsible — he loves her and intends to marry her. Finally he and

Miriam go to the old house where Emily looks after an elderly woman. Warren goes in first. When he fails to return, Miriam ventures in – and comes face to face with a murderous Emily. Fortunately the police arrive in time to save her and Emily is revealed to be none other than ... Warren! Seems he was born a girl but raised as a boy in order to qualify for some inheritance or other and was now out to eliminate anyone who might know the truth.

Homicidal saw the coming together of **Psycho**-style terror and Hammer-style gore. You saw the knife going in and the blood gush out (something Hitchcock had scrupulously avoided showing). There was also a decapitation scene that started a vogue. Many people at the time seemed to think **Homicidal** was as good as, if not better than, **Psycho**. Now its reputation seems non-existent. One reason for this might be Castle's legendary use of gimmicks to promote his films. **Homicidal** was no exception. Just as Miriam was about to enter the old house to face whatever horrors lay within, the film was interrupted by a 'Fright Break' and Castle's voice is heard offering a refund to anyone in the audience too lily-livered to withstand the film's terrifying conclusion. All you had to do was follow the special yellow line to ... *Coward's Corner!*

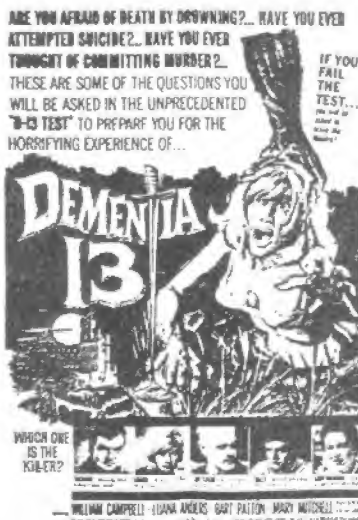
Close behind Castle in the cash-in stake came Britain's Hammer Films. The year of **Psycho**'s release, Hammer made two modern-day thrillers in the **Diabolique** mould: **Taste of Fear** (U.S. **Scream of Fear**) and **The Full Treatment**. Thereafter came a steady stream of cheap black and white thrillers patterned after Clouzot's film or **Psycho** or attempting permutations of both: **Paranoic** (1962), **Nightmare** (1962), **Maniac** (1962), **Panic** (1963), **Hysteria** (1964). These were mostly pallid, wordy efforts, usually weighed down by the convolutions of their contrived plots and lacking the directness and vigour of the Hitchcock and Castle movies.

Back in the States, director Robert Aldrich seems to have said to himself: "Wait a minute, what if there really had been a crazy old Mrs. Bates knocking off those people ...?" The result was a very successful **Whatever Happened to Baby Jane** (1962), which presented former Hollywood queens Bette Davis and Joan Crawford in a new and distinctly unflattering light as a pair of aging Hollywood grotesques gradually succumbing to madness and murder. The resulting 'crazy lady' cycle was a godsend to producers as they could resurrect the big-name female stars of yesteryear as character actresses, the withered looks of the former beauties lending the films an undeniably grotesque quality.

After scripting a relatively unsuccessful psychopath movie, **The Couch** (1962), Robert Bloch joined forces with William Castle and came up with a Joan Crawford



Top and middle: Scenes from **Peeping Tom**, the classic movie by the greatly under-rated British director Michael Powell, now hired as advisor by writer/director of **Dementia 13** (below), Francis Ford Coppola.



vehicle, **Straight-Jacket** (1963). This is the one where she plays a supposedly rehabilitated axe-murderess who comes to live with her daughter and promptly starts finding severed heads in the bed. The following year Bloch wrote and Castle directed another 'Is she imagining all this or is it really happening?' entry: **The Nightwalker**, with a well-preserved Barbara Stanwyck. The same year Bette Davis played good and evil twins in **Dead Ringer**, a **Baby Jane** variant.

Not to be outdone, Hammer cast Davis as **The Nanny** (1965) and recruited another veteran actress, Tallulah Bankhead, for **Fanatic** (1965), based on Anne Blaisdell's novel, **Nightmare**. Known in the U.S. as **Die, Die, My Darling!**, **Fanatic**, scripted by Richard Matheson, was one of the best of the senior psychopath movies as well as the first to be shot in colour. The plot was a switch on **Psycho** along the lines of 'What if it was Norman who died and Mrs. Bates who was still alive?'. Young Stephanie Powers comes to Britain to pay her respects to the mother of her accidentally deceased boyfriend. At first welcoming, Mrs. Trefoil (Bankhead) soon reveals herself as a religious and then a homicidal maniac with no intention of letting Stephanie leave the place alive.

The man who had started the axes and old lace cycle, Robert Aldrich, got back into the game with another Bette Davis vehicle, **Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte** (1964). A disappointing, overlong slab of Southern-fried Gothic enlivened only by a couple of decapitations. More heads rolled in **Dementia 13** (G.B. **The Haunted and the Hunted**) (1963), made in Ireland by a young Roger Corman protégé called Francis Coppola, and in **Night Must Fall** (1964) Albert Finney dropped his Angry Young Man image to play a Charming Young Axe Murderer travelling around with a hat-box containing ... well, nothing you would fancy wearing even at Ascot. While in **Two on a Guillotine** (1965) Cesare Romero was a mad magician whose favourite trick required a rapid turnover of assistants. These must have been more decapitations (albeit only screen ones) in the early sixties than at any time since the French Revolution! Interestingly, decapitation had been the fate suffered by the Janet Leigh character in Bloch's **Psycho**, but Hitchcock had vetoed that in the film as being too extreme. Which shows how audience sensibilities have changed in just a few short years.

Still in 1965 up-and-coming director Roman Polanski provided a welcome change from all those murderous grannies with a beautiful young female psychopath in the shape of Catherine Deneuve in **Repulsion**. Polanski and his screenwriter Gerard Brach cleverly supplied their lead character with all sorts of violent hallucinations so they were able to combine a case history approach with sudden William Castle-style shocks. (On

the strength of **Repulsion**, Polanski was later chosen to direct **Rosemary's Baby**, produced by Castle.) **Repulsion** proved highly influential in its own right and in the seventies was flattered by two virtual remakes: **Whispers of Fear** and **Symptoms**.

The year following **Repulsion**, Milton Subotsky's London-based Amicus Films finally jumped on the psychological horror bandwagon with **The Psychopath**. Though written by Bloch and directed in stylish colour by Freddie Francis, this plot-heavy who-dunnit about a killer who leaves a doll beside the bodies of his victims seemed closer in spirit to an old-fashioned Edgar Wallace murder mystery than to modern terror movies such as **Psycho** and **Repulsion**. Commercially this was perhaps not such a bad approach as, throughout the sixties, films based on mysteries by Edgar Wallace or his son, Bryan Edgar Wallace, proved tremendously popular in Europe, especially Italy and Germany. (Freddie Francis had directed an Anglo-German Wallace movie, **Traitor's Gate** with Klaus Kinski, in 1964.) German productions based on Wallace stories generally involved weird criminal societies or hooded psycho-killers prowling an eternally fogbound London that was as authentic as Hollywood's idea of Transylvania. (Sample titles: **The Phantom of Soho** (1963), **The Hunchback of Soho** (1966) and **The Soho Ripper** (1970).) As the German films ran out of steam and popularity, Italian filmmakers began to make their own rival murder mysteries (sometimes passed off by distributors as Wallace adaptations) emphasising those elements that appealed to them most, namely the sex and violence. These colourful murder thrillers, known as *gialli*, were to become an enduring genre of Italian popular cinema. A typical *giallo* is a who-dunnit in which the hero and/or heroine is up against an apparently demented killer, usually masked and often wearing leather gloves (so you can't deduce the killer's sex), who stalks and slays a succession of victims, mostly gorgeous young women. The actual murders are invariably violent, very gory, and usually shot with a great deal of cinematic flair reinforced by manic fast-cutting and a musical soundtrack of almost operatic lavishness. A *giallo* without its murders would be like a spaghetti western without gunfights.

The first *giallo* to have any impact outside Italy seems to have been Mario Bava's **Six Women for the Murderer** (1964) which had some success in the U.S. and Great Britain under the more discreetly suggestive title **Blood and Black Lace**. Starring Cameron Mitchell, the film concerns a masked killer cutting a swathe through the beautiful models of a Rome fashion house. A former cinematographer, Bava also made films in other genres but was to return several times to the theme of the psycho-killer with such films as **A Hatchet for a Honeymoon**



Top: Catherine Deneuve haunted by her own fears in **Repulsion**. Below: Karl Boehm killed by his camera. Another scene from **Peeping Tom**.



Top: Jessica Harper in a deadly struggle with an incarnation of evil in Dario Argento's *Suspiria*. Right: One of the many frightening moments faced by Jessica Harper in *Suspiria*. Below: Argento's classic *Deep Red* (*Profondo Rosso*) was initially announced as *Suspiria 2*.



(1969), *Twitch of the Death Nerve* (1972) and *Shock*. (Since Bava's recent death, his director-son Lamberto has displayed a similar penchant for the macabre, his current project being *The House with the Dark Stairs*.)

As well as a son to carry on the family tradition, Bava also has a spiritual heir in a young man named Dario Argento. After starting out as a writer of spaghetti westerns, Argento wrote and directed *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1969), a very successful *giallo* about an American writer in Rome who sets out to unmask a brutal killer. *Cat O'Nine Tails* (1971) and *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (1972) were in similar vein. Bava's influence is apparent not just in the gory set-pieces and choice of subject matter but in the fluid camera-work and expressionistic use of colour and sets (Argento cites Fritz Lang as another major influence). In *Deep Red* (1976) Argento introduced an element of the supernatural in the person of a stage medium who announces there is a murder in the audience and thereby precipitates her own death. Witchcraft played an important part in Argento's best film to date, *Suspiria* (1977), which has been followed by *Inferno* (1981) and his current Italian hit *Tenebrae* (1982). Like Hitchcock, Argento likes making personal appearances in his films. Apparently, whenever there's a gory murder to be filmed, it's Argento's own skinny hands that do the stabbing and throttling etc. Hard to imagine Sir Alfred waddling up to the shower curtain and taking a stab at Janet Leigh!

The *gialli* of the sixties and seventies may have been streets ahead of their Hollywood counterparts when it came to explicit gore and violence, but they were pale anaemic confections compared to the products of the American 'hard gore' filmmakers who became active in the early sixties. Despite fairly low budgets, the *gialli* were proper films, technically accomplished and often starring imported American 'names' like John Saxon and Cameron Mitchell. The hard gore movies, on the other hand, were amateurish 'backyard' cheapies on a par with the crudest porno films and often made by the same kind of maverick independent producers. Most infamous of these is Herchell Gordon Lewis, known to posterity as the 'King of Gore'. A former English teacher at an American university, Lewis had been a pioneering producer of early 'nudie' films before initiating the hard gore genre with *Blood Feast* (1963) ('His Nubile Young Victims Screamed Out Their Life Blood As He Prepared The Most Horrible Of All Feasts!').

Lewis' early partner, David F. Friedman, has claimed that he got the idea for the film following a visit to the now-defunct *Grand Guignol* theatre in Paris - a theatre specialising in short horror plays featuring nauseatingly convincing on-



DARIO ARGENTO'S

SUSPIRIA 2

stage tortures, operations and executions. Lewis' version of how **Blood Feast** came into existence is simply that the Nudie market was becoming saturated and he realised the need to get into a new area of exploitation filmmaking where he would be safe from competition from the studios. Having tried to turn people on with his nudies, he next resolved to turn their stomachs.

Blood Feast concerns the attempts by an insane 'exotic caterer' to bring to life an ancient Egyptian goddess by assembling a new body for her from bits and pieces removed from various girls he murders. In one scene he removes a girl's brain. In another, he reaches into a victim's mouth and rips out her tongue. Lewis' make-up effects were rough and ready to say the least and depended more on what he could scrounge from the local slaughterhouse than on the ingenuity of a Rick Baker or Tom Savini. For the tongue-ripping scene, Lewis later revealed, a complete sheep's tongue, liberally doused with cranberry sauce and airfreshener to disguise the fact that it was past its prime, was stuffed into the mouth of the 'actress' concerned. The whole film was shot in only six days for a budget of \$20,000; on the drive-in circuit, its wildfire notoriety ensured a return in excess of a million dollars.

As **Blood Feast's** biggest audience proved to be in the rural South, Lewis tailored his second gore movie, **2,000 Maniacs!** (1964), specifically for that market. A group of visitors from the North are lured into a small Southern town celebrating the Civil War Centennial; one by one, they're murdered by the townspeople in various elaborate and messy ways. There's a mild SF twist in the tale when the two remaining survivors manage to alert the state police, only to be informed that the town no longer exists, the entire population having been massacred by Northern troops a century earlier!

One interesting aspect of **2,000 Maniacs!** is the way it anticipates the many later horror movies (**Texas Chainsaw Massacre**, **The Hills Have Eyes**, **Just Before Dawn**, etc) where a group of unsuspecting strangers, usually city-dwellers, intrude on a backwoods community, only to discover that the natives are anything but friendly.

Lewis continues making his inimitable brand of hard gore movies into the early seventies. **Colour Me Blood Red** (1965) was about a mad painter who discovers that blood (other people's!) provides just the right shade of red he needs. **A Taste of Blood** (1967) ('A Ghastly Tale Drenched with Gouts of Blood Spurring from the Writhing Victims of a Madman's Lust!') was actually a modern vampire story. **The Gruesome Twosome** (1968) was about a pleasant old lady who persuades her moronic son to give her wig-making business a boost by scalping young women. (This may have inspired William



Top: A typical *giallo* killer from Argento's *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*. Below: Another nightmarish moment from *Suspiria*.



Lustig's recent much-reviled **Maniac** (1981) in which Joe Spinell displays similar scalphunting inclinations.)

The Wizard of Gore (1970) seems to be a tip of the hat to *grand guignol* with its story of Montag the Magician whose stage act consists of him sawing up female volunteers (they don't suffer any ill effects until a few hours later when the trick falls apart—literally!) This too seems to have provided the inspiration for a later movie: Joel Reed's subtly-titled **Bloodsucking Freaks** (first released in 1978 as **The Incredible Torture Show**) which catalogues the grisly exploits of Sardu the Magician and his Theatre of the Macabre.

But the 'King of Gore' had his imitators—or at least eccentric rivals—long before **Bloodsucking Freaks**. David Graham's **The Undertaker and His Pals** (1967) was a gore variant on the Sweeney Todd story—as was Andy Milligan's **Bloodthirst Butchers** made two years later. Milligan is reputed to have directed, written, produced and photographed no less than twenty-three shoestring features, many of them gore movies like **The Ghastly Ones** (1968), in a ten year span.

Another cut-price gore merchant deserving of an immediate NFT season was Ray Dennis Steckler, director and star of the legendary **Teenage Psycho meets Bloody Mary** (also known as **Incredibly Strange Creatures who Stopped Living and became Mixed-Up Zombies**) (1963) and **The Maniacs are Loose!** (1965), the latter about a gang of escaped psychos at large, an old favourite device that turned up again recently in Jack Sholder's **Alone in the Dark** (1982).

H.G. Lewis' last gore movie was **The Gore-Gore Girls** (1972) about a killer stalking the girls in a strip-joint (which sound like an ideal plot for a *giallo*!) Lewis had gotten into gore in the first place because it was the one area where he felt safe from competition from Hollywood. But since 1966 a dramatic revolution had been taking place in the film industry, with a succession of controversial but successful films establishing new standards of screen realism (i.e. screen violence) and dragging Hollywood further and further down the path hewn (*hacked?*) by Lewis and his competitors.

Television played a major part of this revolution. Studio executives were finally beginning to wake up to the fact that people were no longer prepared to pay to see what they could watch at home for free. Films *had* to show more, go further or go out of business. Then there was the new generation of writers and directors, all eager to show that they were more hip, more *daring* than the Hollywood Old Guard. But probably the most significant factor was America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Young American servicemen who experienced the war first-hand, and lived to return home to tell about it, could no longer tolerate the old Hollywood realism where bullets often didn't

make entry holes, let alone exit holes, and where characters still made long last-breath speeches despite having just been hit by an artillery shell or an express train. The Folks Back Home followed the war on the Box every night so they were getting an idea of what real violence looked like too. And the war provided filmmakers with a pretty good – if not always convincing – excuse for putting blood and gore on the screen. Anytime they were accused of showing gratuitous violence, all they had to do was mumble something about it *symbolising* the war and that seemed to make it all right. Who could object to a little screen ketchup when people were dying in a *real* shooting war?

The opening shots in the screen violence revolution were probably fired in **A Fistful of Dollars** (1966) and the stampede of spaghetti westerns that followed it. The following year the shots became a machine-gun roar with **Bonnie and Clyde** and its bloody shoot-outs. 1968 was a bumper year for breakthrough movies. Hollywood and William Castle produced **Rosemary's Baby** – but Pittsburgh and George Romero produced **The Night of the Living Dead**. Shot cheaply in black and white in a documentary style, this instant classic was able to get away with things that a larger-budgeted colour production probably wouldn't have dared attempt. **NOTLD** didn't get a proper release but nevertheless was to have a steady and pervasive influence as a cult item on the campus and late-night circuits. Above all, it showed aspiring filmmakers that you *could* make films on minuscule budgets and without stars and still make a heap of money and critical rep.

Meanwhile, in England, young Michael Reeves was making himself a reputation that he didn't live to enjoy with **Witchfinder General** (U.S. **Conqueror Worm**), which kicked off a sub-genre of *historical* splatter movies.

With **The Wild Bunch** (1969) Sam Peckinpah popularised the slow-motion death – all the better to see the blood spurt! – while in another western, **Soldier Blue** (1970), Ralph Nelson showed the U.S. Cavalry hacking up defenceless Indians. (A Vietnam allegory, so he said.) 1971 was a particularly harrowing year for filmgoers. Peckinpah devastated Cornwall in **Strawdogs**, **Dirty Harry** sorted out a Viet vet psycho-killer and Ken Russell and **The Devils** ran amok. The same year, Polanski surprised everyone by making, as his first film since his wife's murder by the Manson gang, a splattery version of **Macbeth** (which ought to have reminded the critics that dramatic representations of violence and death were not a diabolical invention of the movies in the Permissive Sixties but actually part of a long-established theatrical tradition going back as far, at least, as Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge dramas – as the National

Theatre's current production of Thomas Kyd's **A Spanish Tragedy** bears out.)

The year H.G. Lewis gave up the gore, 1972, saw the release of two more Hollywood breakthrough movies – Robert Aldrich's **Ulzana's Raid**, with its scary, torture-loving Apaches standing in for the Vietcong, and John Boorman's **Deliverance** in which murderous hill-billies served much the same purpose. Just as significant, if not as well-publicised, was the release of the \$90,000 film shot on 16mm with an amateur cast:

The Last House on the Left. With a story ripped off from Ingmar Bergman's **The Virgin Spring**, **House** concerns a gang of psychos who waylay, torture and eventually kill two girl hitchhikers. Later the killers end up in the home of the parents of one of the girls. Realising the truth, the parents mete (meat?) out appropriate retribution.

Last House is a hard gore film with the camera dwelling almost gloatingly on each torture and killing, including the disembowelling of one of the victims. While the Lewis gore movies are partly redeemed by a manic sense of the ridiculous and a nudging wit that make them (almost) palatable, **House's** writer/director Wes Craven pursues a grimly downbeat approach that gives his film all the entertainment value of a nasty car accident. (Craven has described the film as – yes – a Vietnam allegory!) Despite (or because of) its repulsiveness, **Last House** was sufficiently successful to stimulate a number of imitations such as **Don't Look in the Basement** (1973). Henceforth hard gore was no longer the freakshow curiosity that Lewis had made of it but a recognised sub-genre of the horror movie – not exactly welcome, but tolerated.

In **Last House** a couple of the villains get their comeuppance with a chainsaw – an image that was to recur in one of the most successful of the independently-produced psycho movies: Tobe Hooper's **Texas Chainsaw Massacre** (1974). Made with a student cast for a shoestring \$93,000, **Chainsaw** loosely-based on the true story of Wisconsin cannibal/necrophile Ed Gein, whose weird crimes had provided the basis for Bloch's **Psycho** novel. The steady erosion of literary and screen taboos in the intervening years meant that Hooper could be more explicit about the nature of Gein's activities than was possible for Bloch or Hitchcock. Yet, despite the suggestiveness of the title, there is remarkably little gore in **Chainsaw**. Hooper cleverly gets the audience's imagination working for him, making us *anticipate* the worst – something which is inevitably scarier than any amount of butchershop fumbblings. In this Hooper is greatly helped by the film's 'looseness'. **Psycho** may have been Hitchcock's least 'plotty' film but it seems *over-plotted* compared with **Chainsaw**. For **Psycho's** Girl on the Run with Stolen Money, Hooper

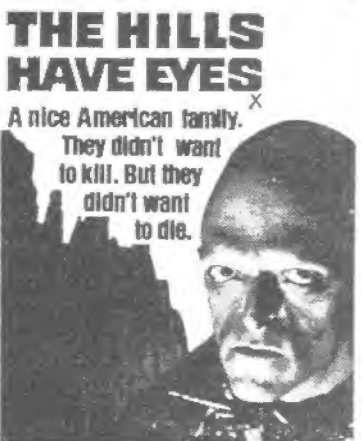
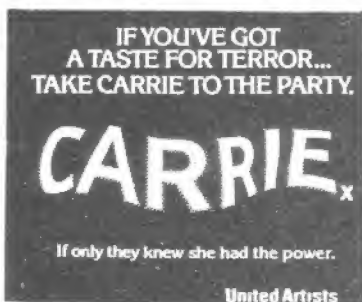


substitutes a vanload of rather mundane teenagers, who, through no fault of their own, enter the ogres' den. They simply show up and start getting got. Simple, but oh-so-effective. Because they're all given equal 'weight', and none of them are guilty of anything (like stealing a McGuffin) we don't know who's going to get got next or when or how. Like the poster says: "Who will survive – and what will be left of them?" Now, of course, this approach has become rather over-familiar, but at the time of *Chainsaw*'s release, such plotlessness seemed almost experimental. It has provided an enduring model, while the film itself has spawned a host of imperfect clones, from the home-grown *Motel Hell* (1980); to Hong Kong's chop-socky version, *We Are Going to Eat You* (1981).

Coincidentally, the same year that Hooper made *Chainsaw*, a pair of young Canadians, Alan Ormsby and Bob Clark (future director of *Porky's*) were busy making their own-cut price version of the Ed Gein story, *Deranged*, with another horror enthusiast, Tom Savini, assisting Ormsby with the make-up. (Clark and Ormsby had previously made the Romero-inspired *Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things* (1972) and a horror movie about a vengeful Viet vet, *Dead of the Night* (aka *Deathdream*) (1973).) *Deranged* is a more accurate version of the Gein story than *Psycho* or *Chainsaw*, but not without black humour in its account of the 'Butcher of Woodside', who stuffs his domineering mother's body when she dies, then goes hunting for further corpses to keep her company. Tobe Hooper also took a black humour approach to real-life murders with his follow-up to *Chainsaw*: *Eaten Alive* (aka *Deathtrap*) (1976) in which Neville Brand gives a wonderfully hammy performance as a demented inn-keeper who feeds his guests to his pet alligator. Condemned in Britain for alleged excessive violence, the film is in fact, a rather restrained account of a Texan murderer called Joe Ball – the real Joe had not one but five hungry 'gators to feed!

Even a relatively successful independent move like *Chainsaw* was inevitably nowhere near as influential as such internationally successful Hollywood splatter movies as *The Exorcist* (1973) (green splatter!) and *The Omen* (1976) which established the vogue for spectacular 'creative deaths'. By 1978 film industry analysts were predicting that the low-budget horror movie would

Left top: Two scenes from *Night of the Living Dead*. George Romero shooting part of the opening graveyard sequence and (below) Confrontation even before the zombies arrive. Middle: A typically gruesome death from *Inferno*. Below: Mia Farrow sees her devil child in *Rosemary's Baby*. Right: A page of cheerful copy lines from (top) *Motel Hell*, *Carrie*, *Night of the Living Dead*, and *The Hills Have Eyes*.



soon be dead, unable to compete with lavish studio products such as *Carrie* (1976) or *Damien – Omen 2* (1978). Then, just to prove them wrong, John Carpenter came up with *Halloween*, a smash hit cheapie whose unknown female lead just happened to be the daughter of Tony 'The Boston Strangler' Curtis and *Psycho*'s Janet Leigh ... (You guessed it: Jamie Lee Curtis!)

The decision to make *Halloween* was probably taken in the wake of the surprise success of AIP's *The Town That Dreaded Sundown* (1977), an apparently true story about a masked killer at large in a Texas town. *Halloween* is also rather reminiscent of that other festive horror movie, Bob Clark's *Black Christmas* (aka *Silent Night, Evil Night*) (1975). With its prowling camera and masked killer with a knife, *Halloween* also comes across like an anaemic, Protestant version of an Italian *giallo*. Hardly surprising as Carpenter, a knowledgeable horror fan since his teens, has expressed admiration for Bava and Argento. Come to think of it, his screenplay for *The Eyes of Laura Mars* (admittedly rewritten by others) is pretty much like Bava's *Blood and Black Lace* with a little ESP thrown in for good measure.

Whatever its influences, *Halloween* has become the most financially successful independently-produced horror movie of all time, returning its \$300,000 cost a hundred times plus. And thereby spawning a horde of stalk and slash/teenagers in peril imitations. One theory attributed its huge success to the fact that it was almost entirely bloodless – a horror movie that wasn't 'heavy' and that you could take your girlfriend to without ruining a beautiful relationship ... And then the following year came *Friday the 13th* (directed by Sean Cunningham, producer of *Last House on the Left*), which was very gory indeed and made almost as much money as *Halloween* anyway.

Also in 1979 came *Alien* with its chest-buster and *white splatter*. And George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (G.B. *Zombie*), sequel to *Night of the Living Dead* with everything you were glad you couldn't make out in *that* made vivid thanks to Technicolor and Tom Savini's effects. (Co-producer of *Zombie* was ... Dario Argento! Maybe it was his hand pushing that screwdriver into the zombie's brain?) The rest, as they say, is history – and like most history, it's been pretty bloody.

As we've seen, Hitchcock's *Psycho* undoubtedly was a landmark movie of lasting influence. But when it comes to handing out the credit (or blame) for liberating screen violence, let's not overlook the contributions made by the likes of Henri-Georges Clouzot, William Castle, H.G. Lewis, George Romero, Mario Bava, Sam Peckinpah ... and William Shakespeare! □

HORROR ON THE CHEAP

by Stephen Jones

*A triple-threat of editor, artist and author makes Steve Jones one of the most visible people in the British fantasy world. Together with Dave Sutton he edited the award-winning **Airgedlam** and the multiple award-winning **Fantasy Tales**, a tribute to the pulp era of **Weird Tales**. He also edits, with Jo Fletcher, the **British Fantasy Society Newsletter** in a style reminiscent of his late lamented **Fantasy Media**. He writes extensively on fantasy films (most recently for **Famous Monsters**) and does artwork for a whole range of magazines in the UK, US and Europe.*

In 1960, Alfred Hitchcock released his film version of the book **Psycho**; after more than 250 short stories and seven novels, Robert Bloch became an overnight success...

Bloch was born on April 5th 1917 in Chicago, Illinois. One of his great childhood passions was the silent cinema – 'The magic murmur of the organs in rich darkness; the flickering fantasy of the film itself,' is how he later described it. Between 1924 and 1929 he saw hundreds of movies on successive Saturday afternoons. But he believes he owes his interest in fantasy to one particular film of this period: in 1925, at the age of eight, he attended his first movie alone at night. The picture was **The Phantom of the Opera**, starring Lon Chaney Sr., and as Bloch remembers: "It scared the living hell out of me and I ran all the way home to enjoy the first of about two years of recurrent nightmares."

Two years later Bloch discovered the pulp magazine **Weird Tales**, and particularly admired the cosmic horror stories of H.P. Lovecraft. In 1932 he wrote his first fan letter to Lovecraft, and the writer responded, encouraging further correspondence, and finally suggested Bloch try writing his own stories. "Why he bothered with the rambling letters of a 15-year-old kid, I'll never know," Bloch said later, "But his kindness and interest got me started."

In 1934 Bloch began submitting his stories to the fan publications with some success. Encouraged, he sent his work to **Weird Tales**; and that same year, only a couple of months after his high-school graduation, editor Farnsworth Wright bought his first professional story: 'The Feast in the Abbey' appeared in the January 1935 **Weird Tales** and over the next 25 years Bloch's work was published by most of the major science fiction and fantasy pulps, as well as mystery titles and men's magazines like **Playboy** and **Rogue**.

In 1944 he scripted 39 episodes of the radio horror show **Stay Tuned for Terror**, based on his own stories, and throughout the 1940s and '50s Bloch's output of horror fiction, often combined with his own particular brand of 'graveyard humour', steadily grew.

1959 saw the publication of his most successful novel, **Psycho**. MCA, the agency representing Alfred Hitchcock, bought the film rights for only \$9,500; it went on to become the second-highest grossing black and white film ever made, earning millions for its director and Paramount Pictures. The screenplay, by Joseph Stefano (who later produced and wrote many episodes of **The Outer Limits**), followed the novel very closely and Hitchcock later admitted: "**Psycho** all came from Robert Bloch's book. The screenwriter contributed dialogue only, no ideas."

But although he had little direct

involvement with the film, Bloch's subsequent career has always been linked with the success of Hitchcock's classic thriller.

By the time **Psycho** was released, Bloch had already moved to Los Angeles and had begun writing scripts for television and the movies. His TV credits include such regular series as **Lock-up**, **Alfred Hitchcock Presents** and **The Alfred Hitchcock Hour**, Boris Karloff's **Thriller**, **Star Trek**, Hammer's **Journey into the Unknown**, Rod Serling's **Night Gallery**, and two very fine made-for-TV movies: **The Cat Creature** (1973) and **The Dead Don't Die** (1975).

During the early '60s he also wrote the screenplays for a number of low-budget horror movies: **The Couch** (1960), **The Cabinet of Caligari** (1961), and William Castle's **Straight-Jacket** (1963) and **The Night Walker** (1964). But none of these films did his work full justice, and it was left to a small British company to attempt to film Bloch's stories with taste and intelligence...

About the same time that Hitchcock was making **Psycho**, two American producers, Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg, were in Britain making their first horror film for the princely sum of £45,000. **City of the Dead** (**Horror Hotel** in the U.S.A.) was scripted by George Baxt and Subotsky and featured Christopher Lee. As Subotsky remembers, "What is interesting about the film is that it was structured like **Psycho**, but I wrote it before **Psycho**... We killed off the heroine and then had someone come in and investigate what happened to her. Nobody had done this in films as far as I know, and we did it first."

The film was a moderate success, and soon after its release Rosenberg and Subotsky formed Amicus Productions and stayed in Britain to continue making rock 'n' roll pictures.

Their second horror film followed in 1964; **Dr. Terror's House of Horrors** had an anthology format patterned after the classic British chiller **Dead of Night** and co-starred Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. The film made a lot of money and quickly established Amicus as a serious rival to Britain's other horror studio, Hammer Films.

Subotsky started looking around for his next project, and when he read Robert Bloch's short story 'The Skull of the Marquis de Sade', decided he could turn it into a film. "What I liked about it was that I saw we could do the last four reels without any dialogue," said Subotsky. He bought the film rights from Bloch and wrote the script himself. "My initial contact was with Max Rosenberg, the other half of the company," Bloch remembers, "though I corresponded with Milton concerning the material and met him in London on both my visits there, in 1965 and 1968."

It was filmed in 1965 as **The Skull**. Once again it re-united Cushing and Lee, this

time as a couple of collectors of occult objets d'art who both want to own the skull of the infamous Marquis de Sade. But the skull still exerts a malignant supernatural influence, finally bringing death to all who own it ... Although made on a low budget, director Freddie Francis brought an imaginative nightmare quality to many sequences (only let down by the cheap-looking special effects – a recurring problem in most Amicus films), and the two stars were well supported by a cast that included Patrick Wymark, Nigel Green, Michael Gough, George Coulouris and Patrick Magee. The ending was particularly memorable, with the final scene filmed through the eye-sockets of the skull.

Bloch was happy with the adaptation and agreed to script Amicus' next horror film, *The Psychopath*. Subotsky and Rosenberg once again called on the services of director Freddie Francis and star Patrick Wymark for this low-key thriller, based on Bloch's original unpublished story. Four apparently unconnected men are brutally murdered. The only clue is a small doll, left at the scene of each crime. According to Bloch, Subotsky and Francis 'enhanced' the film with touches of their own. But the badly-handled murders and weak supporting cast (Margaret Johnston, John Standing, Alexander Knox) left it to Wymark's old-fashioned Police Inspector Holloway to hold the film together. The climax was genuinely macabre, but unfortunately the rest of the film didn't live up to the final sequence.

"Visiting London in 1965, I met Milton and Max for the first time and went out to Shepperton one day to see the shooting of the film," said Bloch. "It was then that I got my first intimation of the miniscule budgets under which Amicus laboured: a key scene which I'd written to be played upstairs was instead played in a trapdoor niche dressed as a basement, because it saved the cost of an additional set and more elaborate camerawork."

Bloch's next assignment for Amicus was an adaptation of H.F. Heard's novel *A Taste of Honey*. He was delighted at the prospect: Not only did he have great admiration for the book, but he also envisaged an opportunity to re-unite his old friends Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee in the same film. Accordingly, he wrote the ageing Karloff in the villain's role as a wheelchair invalid breeding a hive of killer bees on a remote island, and Lee's function as the more obvious suspect seemed ideal. "Again the question of budget seemed to hamper such casting," said Bloch – the roles were finally played by Frank Finlay and Guy Doleman. "Later I was told that the director (Freddie Francis again) ordered a re-write whilst the producers were away and began shooting before the changes were okayed. True or false, the results distressed me, being faithful neither to my script or Mr. Heard's novel ... Heard

certainly deserved better treatment, and perhaps I did too." Although made in early 1966, the film was finally released a year later as *The Deadly Bees* – and then with some scenes cut. The bee attacks (using multi-imaged real bees) were effectively handled and the picture did at least keep the audience from guessing the killer's identity until the end.

But long before Bloch learned of the film's fate, he was already working on the first of three omnibus efforts he scripted for Amicus. Harking back to the successful format of *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*, Subotsky decided to combine four of Bloch's most famous tales: 'Enoch', 'Terror Over Hollywood', 'Mr. Steinway', and 'The Man Who Collected Poe'. "My relationship was actually a very simple one," said Bloch. "Milton would come up with a suggested treatment of a frame-story and in some cases indicate which of my published short stories he'd prefer me to adapt for the individual sequences in the script. Then I'd write the whole thing, frame and all, and send it along." In *Torture Garden* (1967), five visitors to a carnival are dared by the sinister Dr. Diabolo (Burgess Meredith) to enter his inner sanctum and glimpse what the future holds for them: Michael Bryant has his head eaten by a witch's cat; Robert Hutton is a Hollywood star whose screen longevity is due to the fact that he is a robot; John Standing plays a pianist whose jealous piano pushes his girlfriend out the window, and Jack Palance discovers that Peter Cushing has brought Edgar Allen Poe back to life. "They only did 60 or 70 per cent of what I had written," complained Bloch. However a bigger budget, better-than-usual direction by Freddie Francis and a star cast resulted in an enjoyable chiller. In America, patrons were enticed into the cinemas with the offer of a free packet of 'Fright Seeds' to grow their own *Torture Garden*!

Bloch was soon back working with Amicus again, and *The House That Dripped Blood* (1970) became the company's most critically acclaimed movie. Subotsky had wanted to make a horror film for younger audiences, but his distributor insisted on the British Censor giving the film an 'X' certificate. Once again Bloch adapted four of his short stories, 'Method for Murder', 'The Living End', 'Sweets to the Sweet' and 'The Cloak', around the framework of an old house in the country. When Paul Henderson (Jon Pertwee), one of Britain's foremost horror film stars, disappears, Inspector Holloway (this time played by John Bennett) investigates. Stoker, the estate agent, tells him the tragic history of the building's inhabitants: Denholm Elliott plays a horror writer whose character (Tom Adams) comes to life; Peter Cushing is obsessed with the figure of Salome in a run-down local waxworks; a strict father (Christopher Lee) comes to a nasty end when his young daughter



Above: Peter Cushing examines *The Skull* (1965). Below: Clôe Franks whose interest in witchcraft leads to the death of her father (Christopher Lee); in *The House that Dripped Blood* (1970).





Top: John Pertwee as a horror star who is tempted by (middle) Ingrid Pitt's deadly smile in *The House that Dripped Blood*. Below: Patrick Magee threatened by a murderous mannikin in *Asylum* (1972). Bottom: Peter Cushing as a mysterious stranger in *Asylum*. Right: Innocent-faced Robert Bloch.



practices witchcraft on him, and Pertwee's vain film star visits an antique shop and buys an old cloak that belonged to Count Dracula himself. The film ends with Holloway investigating the basement of the house where he is attacked by Henderson and his leading lady (Ingrid Pitt) now both real vampires...

Director Peter Duffell brought 'an atmospheric and stylish flair to each of the stories, and the final tongue in cheek vampire episode is a personal favourite of Subotsky and Bloch (which the latter believes actually improved upon his work).

But Bloch is probably most satisfied with his last project for Amicus, *Asylum*, made in 1972. The author remembers that the stronger-than-usual frame story was "developed and submitted to me in a treatment by Milton, using a published short story of mine as its basis. We then chose three more of my published works for the main storyline and I wrote the script from this material. One of the stories we agreed upon was a gallows-humour piece; on completion Milton felt it was out of place, and I substituted another segment instead." The linking story ('Mannikins of Horror') concerns Dr. Martin, played by Robert Powell, who arrives to take up a new post at a remote asylum. There he is greeted by Dr. Rutherford (Patrick Magee) who informs him that the head of the institute, Dr. Starr, is now insane and one of the patients. As a test of his capabilities, Martin must interview four patients and decide which is Dr. Starr. Then came the changes to Bloch's script. The 'Frozen Fear' segment which he had placed third because 'the story would be better served if this horrific episode came along after the audience had been "warmed up" properly in advance,' was now first: Richard Todd murders and then dismembers his wife (Sylvia Syms), storing the pieces in a freezer. But when his girlfriend (Barbara Perkins) arrives, she discovers her lover strangled and is subsequently pursued by the neatly-wrapped packages containing bits of the body...

In the next episode, 'The Weird Tailor', Barry Morse portrays a poor tailor who is commissioned by a mysterious stranger (Peter Cushing) to make a magic suit that will revive the dead. Bloch was upset that his original story and script, which featured a decidedly nasty character in the title-role, "was rewritten so the character changed into 'what Freudian psychologists describe, in technical terms, as a poor *schnook*.' Moreover, this sequence - which he'd written as the first episode - was now switched around so that it became the third.

'Lucy Comes to Stay' is a reasonably effective tale of psychological horror in which Barbara (Charlotte Rampling) is incited by her friend Lucy (Britt Ekland) to kill. But the twist is that Lucy doesn't exist

Finally, Martin meets Byron (Herbert

Lorn) who believes he was once a doctor. He claims that the miniature figures he has created are alive and through them he will revenge himself on those who incarcerated him. As the young doctor prepares to leave, confident that he now knows the identity of Dr. Starr, he discovers that his conclusions are horrifically wrong... In this final episode, Bloch described "figures of clay, perfectly-articulated miniature human forms which would be designed and animated by someone like my friend Ray Harryhausen. Alas for good intentions - and a bad budget! What you see upon the screen is what I got. Time and money dictated the necessity of this compromise, not human error in judgement. But the result, I submit, wasn't what I'd intended."

Overall, *Asylum* is the most polished of the Bloch and Amicus collaborations,



thanks to the sure hand of director Roy Ward Baker and the usual fine cast and excellent production values.

"As for *Asylum*," said Bloch "I can only claim credit - or blame - for those portions of the film which were shot in accordance with my script... Considering the handicaps and limitations under which they worked, the producers, director, cast and production people deserve full marks and I can only be grateful for their efforts. As for myself, I'm satisfied with those portions of the film - 'Lucy Comes to Stay' and 'Frozen Fear' - which were shot virtually as I'd written them; dialogue, action and camerawork. For better or worse they serve as examples of how I prefer to see my stories translated to film."

By the mid-1970s the horror boom was coming to an end. Amicus and its old rival Hammer stopped making pictures at

about the same time; Rosenberg and Subotsky acrimoniously split up – the latter to still produce the occasional fantasy film. Bloch continued turning out scripts, short stories and novels. In 1981 *Psycho II*, his sequel to his most famous work, finally appeared, but history repeated itself and Bloch had no connection whatsoever with the Universal film of the same title.

Nowadays Bloch still looks back on his six year association with Amicus with a mixture of pleasure and regret: "Max was an annual or semi-annual visitant to California, but he steered clear of the so-called creative aspects and concentrated on financing and deal-making. Again, there were times when certain sequences I wrote were bludgeoned by the budgets, and a few occasions when – so I've heard – an actor or a director would 'improve' my work. But looking back upon the experience, I wonder if Max wouldn't have been wiser to hold out for better deals or no deals at all," he said.

"Like Milton, he's a highly intelligent man, and I think his mistake was to persuade himself that he must cater to the masses. Granted, the films were no masterpieces, but all got excellent reviews and one (*Asylum*) received first prize at a European festival of fantasy films. But Max, very much like William Castle before he made *Rosemary's Baby*, was a victim of the system. The industry seems to have more respect for a filmmaker who squanders ten million on a total loss than for one who spends two hundred thousand and brings in a small profit. The only way the latter can be regarded as a hero is when he brings in the picture for still less money. Max got into this pattern, and began to look down on his own efforts. 'Exploitation films' had to bear titles like *The House that Dripped Blood* (which showed no gore) or *Torture Garden* (no torture, no garden). I suspect that reasonable titles and a more restrained advertising approach would have earned greater success for Amicus and the films.

"Certainly I've no regrets about my association; once in a while, as in the opening sequence of *Asylum*, I was very happy with what I saw up there on the screen. And having one's work performed by people like Cushing, Lee, Lom, Meredith and Palanca is always exciting to a writer."

NEXT ISSUE: MASTERS OF MAYHEM

BLOCH AT AMICUS

The Skull (1965)

Peter Cushing (as Professor Christopher Maitland), Christopher Lee (as Sir Matthew Phillips), Patrick Wymark (as Marco), Jill Bennett (as Jane Maitland), Nigel Green (as Wilson), Michael Gough (as Auctioneer).

Pr: Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg. Dir: Freddie Francis. Scr: Milton Subotsky from the story 'The Skull of the Marquis de Sade' by Robert Bloch. Ph: John Wilcox. Ed: Oswald Hafenrichter. Mus: Elisabeth Lutyens. Amicus. 83 mins.

The Psychopath (1966)

Patrick Wymark (as Inspector Holloway), Margaret Johnston (as Mrs von Sturm), John Standing (as Mark von Sturm), Alexander Knox (as Frank Saville), Judy Huxtable (as Louise Saville), Don Borisenko (as Donald Laftis), Thorley Walters (as Martin Roth).

Prod: Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Dir: Freddie Francis. Scr: Robert Bloch. Ph: John Wilcox. Ed: Oswald Hafenrichter. Mus: Elisabeth Lutyens. Amicus. 83 mins.

The Deadly Bees (1966)

Suzannah Leigh (as Vicky Robbins), Frank Finlay (as Manfred), Guy Doleman (as Hargrove), Catherine Finn (as Mrs Hargrove), John Harvey (as Thompson), Michael Ripper (as Hawkins), Katy Wilde (as Doris), Michael Gwynn (as Dr Lang).

Prod: Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Dir: Freddie Francis. Scr: Robert Bloch from the novel *A Taste for Honey* by H.F. Heard. Ph: John Wilcox. Ed: Oswald Hafenrichter. Mus: Wilfred Josephs.

Amicus. 123 mins (cut to 83 mins for 1967 re-release).

Torture Garden (1967)

Jack Palanca (as Ronald Wyatt), Burgess Meredith (as Dr Diabolo), Beverly Adams (as Carla Hayes), Michael Bryant (as Colin Williams), John Standing (as Leo), Peter Cushing (as Canning), Robert Hutton (as Paul), Barbara Ewing (as Dorothy Endicott), Michael Ripper (as Gordon Roberts) and David Bauer (as Charles).

Prod: Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Dir: Freddie Francis. Scr: Robert Bloch from his stories 'Enoch', 'Terror over Hollywood', 'Mr Steinway' and 'The Man who collected Poe'. Ph: Norman Warwick. Ed: Peter Elliot. Mus: Don Banks and James Bernard. Amicus. 93 mins.

The House that Dripped Blood (1970)

John Bennett (as Inspector Holloway), John Bryans (as Stoker), John Malcolm (as Police Sergeant), Denholm Elliott (as Charles Hillyer), Joanna Dunham (as Alice), Tom Adams (as Dominick), Robert Lang (as Psychiatrist), Peter Cushing (as Philip Grayson), Joss Ackland (as Rogers), Wolfe Morris (as Waxworks Proprietor), Christopher Lee (as John Reid), Nyree Dawn Porter (as Ann), Clôe Franks (as Janel), Jon Pertwee (as Paul Henderson), Ingrid Pitt (as Carla).

Prod: Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Dir: Peter Duffell. Scr: Robert Bloch from his stories 'Method for Murder', 'The Living End', 'Sweets to the Sweet' and 'The Cloak'. Ph: Ray Parslow. Ed: Peter Tanner. Mus: Michael Dress. Amicus. 102 mins.

Asylum (1972) (1978 US re-release as House of Crazies)

Patrick Magee (as Dr Rutherford), Robert Powell (as Dr Martin), Geoffrey Bayldon (as Max Reynolds), Barbara Parkins (as Bonnie), Sylvia Sims (as Ruth), Richard Todd (as Walter), Peter Cushing (as Smith), Barry Morse (as Bruno), Ann Firbank (as Anna), John Franklyn-Robbins (as Stebbins), Britt Ekland (as Lucy), Charlotte Rampling (as Barbara), James Villiers (as George), Megs Jenkins (as Miss Higgins), Herbert Lom (as Dr Byron).

Prod: Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Dir: Roy Ward Baker. Scr: Robert Bloch from his stories 'Frozen Fear', 'The Weird Taylor', 'Lucy Comes To Stay' and 'Mannikins of Horror'. Ph: Denys Coop. Ed: Peter Tanner. Mus: Douglas Garney. Amicus. 88 mins.



AT THE MONSTER CLUB

Take a dash of **HoH**, add a healthy dose of Milton Subotsky, a sprinkle of **ITC** and a base of the annual Cannes film festival, and the end product (with four weeks to mature) is a nicely produced marketing tool, **The Monster Club** comic magazine.

Thanks to the British fan press, many have heard of the remarkably scarce comic strip adaptation of **The Monster Club**, but few have seen it. At recent conventions, this highly sought-after 32-pager has been sold in auctions at prices as high as £15.

Reviving **Halls of Horror** seems to be a perfect place to make this piece of work available to more than the 1000 recipients of the original.

Thanks to Quality Communications (then Pioneer Press) selling first rights only to filmmakers **ITC**, we are able to reprint the strip across this issue and the next.

February, 1980 proved to be an interesting month for John Bolton and myself. I had just completed my 15-month contractual term as Marvel's editorial director, and, now freed from the restraints of an exclusive arrangement, was ready to take up any new challenge...

Within a week, film producer/editor/writer Milton Subotsky, who had masterminded the only serious rival to Hammer Films in the shape of his Amicus company, telephoned me with an interesting proposition.

Milton had been aware of our magazine, **House of Hammer**, and while he realised we could hardly adapt an Amicus production under the Hammer banner, he saw the potential of comic strip versions of films.

At that time, Milton had reached an agreement with Lord Lew Grade's **ITC** Entertainments company to produce a film based on R. Chetwynd-Hayes' collection of short stories, **The Monster Club**.

Unfortunately, while the film had been partially cast, with leads Vincent Price, John Carradine and Donald Pleasence, there was little time to prepare any promotional (sales) material for the looming Cannes Film Festival.

Had there been more time, the investment would have been formidable to produce any kind of promotional reel, stills, and brochures with actual scenes from the film. Seeing this as an ideal time to combine forces with the **HoH** team, Milton got the go-ahead to have a comic strip version of the film produced.

Our brief was to do the opposite of our usual **HoH** adaptation. Instead of taking an

existing film, its set design, make-up, costumes and locations, and capturing that image as a comic strip, we only had a script to work from, no visuals had yet been produced.

David Jackson, who had adapted several films for **HoH**, and is currently producing **Father Shandor** for **Warrior**, was approached to handle the black and white interior art, and John Bolton agreed to paint the comic's wraparound cover (reproduced as our centrespread poster this issue).

However, what ultimately transpired was John taking on the total art side with the exception of four pages which David (V for Vendetta) Lloyd helped out with, as the deadline loomed nearer.

Unlike the usual adaptation, wherein the basic strengths which convert to comic strip form are emphasised, and the non-visual side played down, **The Monster Club** presented a different kind of challenge as a script. Everything had to be included. Ninety minutes of film in twenty-five pages. None of the luxury of the Marvel-style seventy-five page, three issue adaptations.

The benefits of such an end-product proved to be multiple. Not only could a foreign distributor take the total image of the film back to his own territory, but, because of its strip format (and five language synopsis translation across the last two pages) he would actually be able to 'read' the film visually.

Make-up genius Roy Ashton, who had been responsible for the greater part of Hammer's visual effects during their heyday, was highly complimentary about the werewolf, ghoul and shadmoock visualisations John Bolton had produced for the comic, to the extent of admitting being influenced by them when working on the finished film.

Obviously he wasn't the only one. For a particular sequence in the 'Loughville' segment of the film, John was commissioned to produce seven sepia illustrations, which were used with a voiceover for a flashback sequence.

John also produced a large full colour version of the monster genealogical chart for use in the film (as mentioned in the fourth page of our adaptation). This chart obviously proved popular with the film's cast or crew too, as it mysteriously disappeared after the final day's shooting.

Despite a restrictive budget and shooting schedule, Milton managed to get the film in the can on time, complete with a soundtrack featuring B.A. Robertson and The Pretty Things which rivals Paul Williams' excellent work for **Phantom of the Paradise**.

Apparently no American distribution has yet been agreed upon for **The Monster Club**, so perhaps through our American sales of this magazine we can rectify the situation.

Dez Skinn, other than being publisher of this magazine, has been one of the more colourful characters at fantasy and comics conventions over the last fifteen years. His working associations have been with both comic magazines (editing **MAD**, **Spider-Man**, **Tarzan**, **Buster**, **The Hulk**, etc...) and film/TV magazines (editing **Monster Mag**, **Doctor Who Weekly**, **Star Wars Weekly**, **Starburst**, **TV Heroes**, etc...). From his South London base, he has set up Quality Communications, a company with both publishing and wholesale/retail sides, as well as continuing to provide design and art consultancy work for various film projects.

Members & Guests

IN THE CLUB ...

ERAMUS will be played by
VINCENT PRICE
R. CHETWYND-HAYES will be
JOHN CARRADINE



IN THE FIRST STORY ...

ANGELA will be BARBARA KELLERMANN, RAVEN will be JAMES LAURENSEN
and GEORGE will be SIMON WARD.



IN THE SECOND STORY ...

SAM will be STUART WHITMAN, LUNA will be LESLEY DUNLOP
and THE INNKEEPER will be PATRICK MAGEE.



IN THE THIRD STORY ...

THE FATHER will be RICHARD JOHNSON, THE MOTHER will be BRITT EKLAND
PICKERING will be DONALD PLEASANCE and MOONEY will be ANTHONY VALENTINE



BOLTON







**R. CHETWYND HAYES
HORROR
PAPERBACKS
ON SALE HERE**



Edited & adapted by DEZ SKINN

illustrations by JOHN BOLTON

NIGHT-TIME IN THE CITY. A TIME WHEN MOST WOULD BE EATING... DRINKING. BUT NOT ERAMUS, A CREATURE OF THE DARKENED STREETS, WHO WAS...



...haven't had sup... for two weeks.

W-WELL, I'LL BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU SOME MONEY FOR FOOD...

...no. Can't keep food down... never could...



WELL, I'LL DO ANYTHING I CAN TO HELP YOU...

THE WRETCHED CREATURE'S EYES LIT UP AND HE SEEMED TO GAIN STRENGTH...

ANYTHING? OH, THANK YOU!!



ERK!



POOR RONALD. THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE PROVED SUCH A SHOCK THAT HE FAINTED, AND THE NEXT THING HE KNEW...

WHAT?

I DO THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE ASKED...

MAY I BE PERMITTED TO INTRODUCE MYSELF? MY NAME IS ERAMUS. I'M A VAMPIRE, BUT OF COURSE YOU KNOW THAT!

I DIDN'T BITE DEEP ... YOU WON'T BECOME ONE OF US!

HANDING BACK THE WALLET, ERAMUS NOTICED THE NAME...

R. CHETWYND HAYES! AUTHOR OF THOSE MAGNIFICENT HORROR STORIES.

WHY, YOU'RE MY FAVOURITE WRITER!

YOU MUST LET ME REPAY YOU! I CAN SHOW YOU MATERIAL FOR YOUR NEXT BOOK - THE REAL THING! NO NEED TO WORRY, YOU'LL BE QUITE SAFE...

YOU HAVE MY WORD... THE WORD OF A VAMPIRE!

AT THE MENTION OF NEW MATERIAL, RONALD FELT HIS WRITER'S INSTINCT TAKE CONTROL, AND ERAMUS DID LOOK SINCERE.

MATERIAL? WHAT KIND OF MATERIAL?

I WILL TAKE YOU TO A PLACE WHERE MY FRIENDS ALL MEET. VAMPIRES, WERE-WOLVES, SNAKE-MEN, WASP-WOMEN, GHOULS -- EVERY MONSTER YOU CAN IMAGINE! AND SOME FAR BEYOND THE IMAGINING OF MERE MORTALS! THERE YOU WILL DISCOVER SUCH TALES OF HORROR THAT WILL CURL YOUR TOES AND FREEZE YOUR BLOOD IN YOUR VEINS! JUST A SHORT WALK WILL TAKE US TO...

The MONSTER CLUB

SURELY THIS IS A TOURIST ATTRACTION. IT-IT'S VERY AMUSING, BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY...

I'LL HAVE THE USUAL, MY FRIEND IS PAYING.

I'M AFRAID GROUP B IS OFF, SIR. IF I COULD SUGGEST THE O, AND A TOMATO JUICE WOULD MAKE YOUR "FRIEND" LOOK LESS CONSPICUOUS!

AND, AS THE DRINKS ARRIVED...

THIS IS QUITE PLEASANT,
BUT DOES NOT SUSTAIN US.
GETTING THE REAL THING
BECOMES CONSTANTLY
MORE DIFFICULT ---

PEOPLE ARE
SO EDUCATED THESE
DAYS, THROUGH T.V.
AND HORROR FILMS.

EVERYBODY
KNOWS ABOUT
GARLIC AND STAKES
THROUGH THE HEART.
IT TAKES ALL THE
COURAGE A VAMPIRE
POSSESSES JUST TO
WALK THE STREETS!

NERVOUSLY, RONALD GLANCED ROUND ALMOST
OBLIVIOUS TO ERAMUS'S MUSING. THEN HE
SPOTTED...

THAT CHART.
WHAT IS
IT?

OH, THAT'S
A MONSTER
GENEALOGICAL
CHART.

ERAMUS SHOWED AND NAMED
MANY STRANGE NEW MONSTERS
... AND EXPLAINED WHAT THEY
DID...

SHADMOCK

IT'S QUITE
SIMPLE, REALLY.
ALL YOU HAVE TO
REMEMBER ARE
THE BASIC RULES
OF
MONSTERDOM.

DISCREETLY, ERAMUS
EXPLAINED, NOT WANTING
TO DRAW ATTENTION TO
HIS COMPANION'S
IGNORANCE...

VAMPIRES SUP,
WEREWOLVES HUNT,
GHOULS TEAR, SHADDIES
LICK, MAODIES YAWN,
MOCKS BLOW, BUT
SHADMOCKS ONLY
WHISTLE.

WHISTLE? THAT
DOESN'T SOUND
TOO
TERRIFYING!

OH, BUT IT
IS! I HEARD
OF A MAN ONCE
WHO HAD SEEN
THE RESULTS OF
A SHADMOCK'S
WHISTLE...

ONLY THE
RESULTS...

AND
YET...



BEHOLD A YOUNG MAN WHO HAS WITNESSED TERROR! FOR SIX MONTHS HIS BRAIN TRIED TO CONTROL THAT WHICH HIS MEMORY COULD NOT ERASE. HIS LONG CATALEPTIC TRANCES BEING SPLIT WITH PERIODS OF UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE.



AND BEHIND HIS EYES WHICH EXPRESSED VACANT TERROR, A SECRET... AND A MEMORY...

A MEMORY OF A TIME WHEN HE HAD ONLY WANTED ONE THING... MONEY! QUICKLY, AND BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!

MAYBE WE OUGHT TO LOOK FOR REAL JOBS, GEORGE?

AND BE SLAVES TO THEM ALL OUR LIVES? WE'D NEVER AFFORD TO GET MARRIED...

HERE'S SOMETHING: "ANTIQUARY REQUIRES SECRETARY TO CATALOGUE HIS COLLECTION."

SOME OF THESE OLD FOOLS HAVE STUFF WORTH THOUSANDS. GOLD--MELTED DOWN--UNTRACEABLE!



HE'S OFFERING ENOUGH MONEY... HMM... AND HIS PLACE IS CALLED...



"...ALBERIC HOUSE..."

MR. RAVEN? I'M ANGELA JONES. I WROTE TO YOU ABOUT THE ADVERTISEMENT.

OH, YES. OF COURSE. PLEASE DO COME IN.





BUT GEORGE'S GREED WAS A POWERFUL FORCE...

I CAN'T DO IT. HE WANTED ME FOR THE JOB, AND THE HOUSE IS FULL OF GOOD STUFF... BUT THERE'S SOMETHING... TERRIFYING ABOUT HIM!

YOU SAY IT'S FULL OF GOOD STUFF?

...AND SO ANGELA RETURNED TO ALBERIC HOUSE, MUCH TO THE DELIGHT OF THE MYSTERIOUS MR. RAVEN.

YOU-- YOU CAME BACK.

ANGELA WAS QUICKLY USHERED INTO RAVEN'S STUDY... THERE SEEMED A STRANGE DESPERATE HOPE IN HIS VOICE...

I USED TO WEAR A MASK. BUT IT'S MUCH BETTER FOR PEOPLE TO GET OVER THE SHOCK AT THE BEGINNING...

THEN THEY MIGHT EVEN GROW ACCUSTOMED...

NEXT MORNING, ANGELA FOUND HER NEW EMPLOYER IN THE GARDENS...

GOOD MORNING. OH. I DIDN'T MEAN TO FRIGHTEN THE BIRDS.

THEY ARE MY ONLY FRIENDS. BUT SOON THEY WILL GET TO KNOW YOU, ACCEPT YOU AS A FRIEND, TOO.

AT RAVEN'S DEEP, FASCINATED STARE, ANGELA BEGAN TO TREMBLE, FEELING A STRANGE MIXTURE OF FASCINATION AND FEAR...

I-I MUST GET TO WORK.

ALL THIS DUST. WHY NOT GET SOMEONE TO CLEAN UP THIS PLACE?

I CAN'T ASK PEOPLE TO COME HERE... YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW HARD IT WAS FOR ME TO ADVERTISE FOR YOU. I MUST NEVER GO NEAR PEOPLE, OR LEAVE THE GROUNDS.

AREN'T YOU EVER LONELY?

IF ONLY YOU KNEW THE AGONY OF MY LONELINESS...

AND HE LOOKED AT HER WITH A DESPERATE MUTE APPEAL IN HIS EYES...



LET'S CHUCK IT... FORGET THE WHOLE THING...

IT'S NOT THAT I'M AFRAID OF HIM. IT'S JUST...

AT LEAST GET SOMETHING--SO I CAN SEE WHAT SORT OF STUFF HE'S GOT, GET IT VALUED.



BUT HE TERRIFIES ME... REVOLTS ME IN A WAY. AND YET ... I JUST DON'T KNOW.



BUT THE NEXT DAY BROUGHT FURTHER SURPRISES...

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE SURROUNDED BY FLOWERS.

THE-THE BIRDS. THEY WILL BE WANTING THEIR BREAKFAST.

AH, YES. I MUSTN'T NEGLECT MY OTHER FRIENDS ... YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT MEETING YOU HAS MEANT TO ME...



BUT THE BIRDS HAD NOT ONLY FOUND A FRIEND AT ALBERIC HOUSE, BUT ALSO AN ENEMY...

NO!

AS THE CAT COWERED, RAVEN FELT HIMSELF LOSING CONTROL. A RAGE WAS BUILDING UP INSIDE HIM AS HE HELD THE LIFELESS CREATURE.



HIS LIPS BEGAN TO QUIVER, AND PUCKER UP INTO A SMALL CIRCLE...

THE DEATH-LIKE SILENCE OF ALBERIC HOUSE WAS BROKEN ONLY BY THE BRISK TAPPING OF TYPEWRITER KEYS. UNTIL A SUDDEN HIGH-PITCHED, BARS-CHATTERING SOUND ECHOED AROUND THE HOUSE...



THE BLOOD IN ANGELA'S VEINS ALMOST FROZE WHEN SHE RAN INTO THE HALL AND SAW RAVEN...



WONDERING WHAT HAD SHOCKED RAVEN SO, ANGELA SPED INTO THE GARDEN, WHERE SHE FOUND...



OH, NO! THE CAT!!? BUT HOW... HOW?



DESPITE HER TERROR, ANGELA DID NOT RETURN EMPTY-HANDED THAT NIGHT...

THIS SORT OF STUFF WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FENCE, IT'S TOO SPECIALISED. AND WE'D NEED TONS OF IT FOR THE MELTDOWN VALUE TO BE WORTHWHILE.

BUT I BET HE'S GOT A HANDY LITTLE WALL-SAFE STUFFED WITH CASH SO HE CAN BUY THESE THINGS...



THE FOLLOWING EVENING, INSTEAD OF LEAVING PROMPTLY, ANGELA STAYED TO SEARCH ALBERIC HOUSE. BUT AS SHE CREPT STEALTHILY INTO THE HALL...

RAVEN! AND HE'S GOT COMPANY... JUST MY LUCK...



AND, AS RAVEN'S GUEST STEPPED INTO THE LIGHT...



ANGELA GROANED QUIETLY... KNOWING IT WAS NO USE ARGUING.

TURNING THE LIGHTS ON AT THE SUDDEN SCREAM, RAVEN RUSHED OVER TO ANGELA...



I THOUGHT YOU'D ALREADY GONE HOME.



BUT DON'T WORRY, THAT'S ONLY MY GREAT UNCLE URIAH. I'M AFRAID HE DOES LOOK A LITTLE STRANGE ...TO AN OUTSIDER.

HE'D NEVER HURT YOU! I'VE MADE ALL MY RELATIVES PROMISE THAT THEY'D NEVER HURT YOU!



HE'S VERY NICE REALLY ...DO YOU WANT TO MEET HIM?



STILL TERRIFIED BY THE MEMORY OF THE HIDEOUS FACE, ANGELA COULD BARELY SHAKE HER HEAD, DESPERATELY TRYING TO REJECT HER HORRIFIC EXPERIENCE.

AGAIN RAVEN'S FACE MANAGED A STRANGE CARING SMILE AS HE CONTINUED...



THE OTHER DAY ... IN THE GARDEN ... I LOST CONTROL OF MYSELF. IT WAS HORRIBLE. I KNOW. IT'S MY CONSTANT FEAR THAT...

BUT NO, I'M ALL RIGHT NOW. SEEING YOU HAS COMPLETED THE CURE.

I-I MUST BE GOING.

FEARING WHAT NEW TERRORS WOULD UNFOLD, ANGELA RETURNED TO HER WORK THE FOLLOWING DAY. ONLY TO BE GREETED WITH...

THIS RING ONCE BELONGED TO PRINCESS XEHOIA. SHE WAS SAID TO BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF HER DAY ... MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO.



SHE MUST HAVE HAD YOUR COLOURING. IT MATCHES YOUR EYES AND SKIN PERFECTLY...



SUDDENLY, RAVEN WAS OVERCOME WITH SHYNESS AND RETURNED THE RING TO HIS HIDDEN WALL SAFE...



YOU SHOULD KEEP ALL THOSE THINGS IN THE BANK.

I DON'T LIKE BANKS. YOU HAVE TO SEE ... PEOPLE. MY THINGS ARE MUCH BETTER HERE ... WITH ME.

RAVEN'S FACE SUDDENLY CHANGED. AT ONCE IT FILLED WITH HOPE, YET DOUBT. WITH ANTICIPATION, YET DREAD...

Angela: will you marry me?

I realise my appearance ... and everything, but you could still love me ...



FOR HOURS AFTER, ANGELA KEPT HEARING RAVEN'S PROPOSAL IN HER MIND. AND, THAT NIGHT...

IT'S NO USE, GEORGE. I JUST CAN'T DO IT. NOT TO HIM.

DON'T WORRY. JUST PLAY ALONG WITH HIM. TAKE THE RING AS AN ENGAGEMENT PRESENT, AND REMEMBER THE COMBINATION WHEN HE OPENS THE SAFE. THEN, THE BIG ONE! WE'LL BE RICH!

THE NEXT DAY RAVEN WAS FAR TOO HAPPY TO NOTICE ANGELA'S FEAR AND TENSION BEHIND HER SMILE...

YOU'VE MADE ME SO VERY HAPPY! AND IT'S ONLY FITTING YOU SHOULD HAVE THE RING. THAT IT SHOULD ADORN SUCH A BEAUTIFUL HAND AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES.

ANGELA WAS OBLIVIOUS TO RAVEN'S CONFESSION AS SHE CONCENTRATED ON THE NUMBERS...

I HAVE SOMETHING OF A CONFESSION TO MAKE. I'M A SHADMOCK, BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS... WELL, IF EVER I WHISTLE...

BUT NO... I MUST NOT WHISTLE... EVER!

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS!

YOU MUST MEET SOME OF MY RELATIVES. THEY CAN EXPLAIN... THE SITUATION... TO YOU MUCH BETTER THAN I COULD...

YES-YES. I... ER... SHOULD LIKE THAT...

WE'LL HAVE AN ENGAGEMENT PARTY! AND IT CAN BE IN FANCY DRESS! EVERYONE CAN WEAR MASKS, AND GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW MY FAMILY... GRADUALLY.

AND AS RAVEN'S FINGERS TREMBLED OVER THE SAFE'S COMBINATION, ANGELA WATCHED HIS EVERY MOVE!

AND SO, CAME THE NIGHT OF THE MASKED PARTY...

COME, MY DEAR. IT IS A SHAME TO HIDE SUCH BEAUTY -- BUT HERE WE MUST ALL BE MASKED.

FINALLY, SHE WAS ABLE TO SLIP AWAY FROM THE CROWD INTO THE STUDY...

OPEN, SAFE... PLEASE, PLEASE OPEN!

ANGELA WAS OBLIGED TO DANCE WITH MANY OF RAVEN'S RELATIVES, BUT EVEN MASKED, THEY TERRIFIED HER. SHE HAD MET GREAT UNCLE URIAH... WHAT COULD THESE OTHER DANCING PARTNERS REALLY LOOK LIKE?

BUT SOMEONE ELSE HAD SLIPPED AWAY TOO...

AND, AS THE SAFE FINALLY OPENED, REVEALING ITS TREASURES, ANGELA SCOOPED UP ALL SHE COULD CARRY. BUT WHEN SHE TURNED TO LEAVE...

TAKE THEM. THE MONEY AND OTHER THINGS DO NOT MATTER TO ME... GIVE THEM TO WHOEVER YOU PLEASE, BUT YOU COULD STILL ... LOVE ME.

NO! NO ... YOU'RE HIDEOUS ... REVOLTING! THE MONEY! THE JEWELS! THAT'S ALL I EVER WANTED FROM YOU!

DON'T SAY THAT ... YOU MUSTN'T!

I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU ... YOU NAUSEATING THING. I'D BE SICK IF YOU EVEN TOUCHED ME! YOU'RE HIDEOUS!

AND ONCE MORE RAVEN'S LIPS BEGAN TO TWITCH AND FORM A TIGHT LITTLE CIRCLE, AS HE INHALED DEEPLY.



TWO SOUNDS MADE THE GUESTS TURN SUDDENLY TOWARD THE STUDY. A PIERCING, SHREIKING WHISTLE, LOUDER THAN ANYTHING IMAGINABLE ...



AND A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM OF AGONY!

LATER, THAT SAME NIGHT...



YOU'RE BACK! GREAT. DID YOU GET IT?

BUT ANGELA'S ONLY REPLY WAS...



YOU ... COULD ... STILL ... LOVE ME ...

LOVE ME...

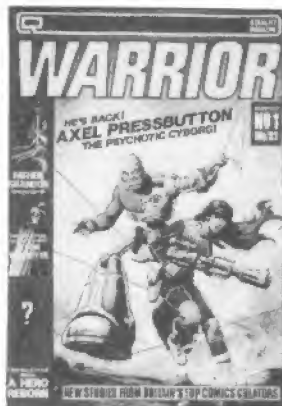


LOVE ...

... ME.

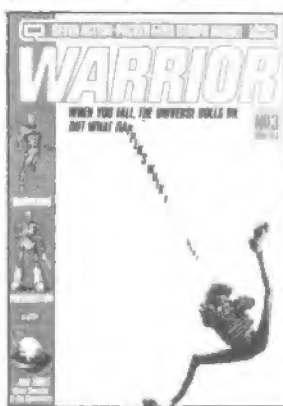
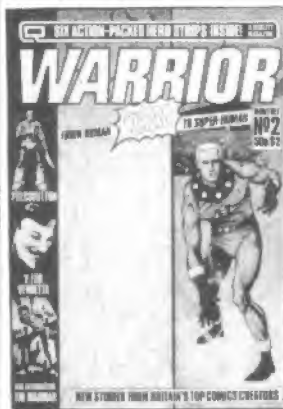


THE BEST OF BRITISH WARRIOR BACK ISSUES:



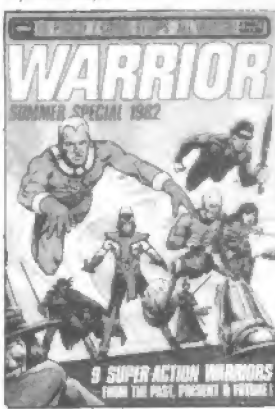
ISSUE ONE ... £1.00(\$4)
Rebirth Marvelman, Legend of Prester John, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton. Special features: "True Story" by Moore & Gibbons, Marvelman article.

ISSUE TWO ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, intro: The Madman. Special features: Dispatches, Pressbutton article.



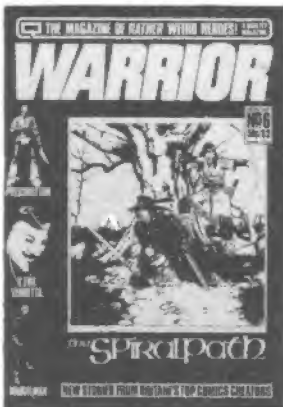
ISSUE THREE ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Zirk solo strip by Moore & Bolland.

ISSUE FOUR ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, Pressbutton origin, The Madman, Shandor, V for Vendetta, Dispatches. Special feature: Fearn's Golden Amazon by David Lloyd.



ISSUE FIVE ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Bonus V for Vendetta complete strip.

ISSUE SIX ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: "Mrs Murphy's Murders" by Steve Moore & Dave Gibbons.



ISSUE SEVEN ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, The Madman, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: Marvelman colour pin-up by Mick Austin.

ISSUE EIGHT ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special feature: "Stir Crazy" by Hunt Emerson.

ISSUE NINE ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special features: Warpsmith by Alan Moore & Garry Leach + Pressbutton pin-up.

ISSUE TEN ... 75p(\$3)
Marvelman, Spiral Path, V for Vendetta, Shandor, Laser Eraser & Pressbutton, Dispatches. Special features: Warpsmith conclusion + Warpsmith colour pin-up.

Subscribe to WARRIOR!

Delivered to your door! Subscribe to **WARRIOR** and save the expense of travel and the worry about missing an issue! Mailed flat, a subscription is inflation-proof. Whatever happens over the next year, the price is fixed if you take advantage of our special subscription offer:
12 issues (within Great Britain): £7.50 12 issues (overseas, seairmail): \$24.00 12 issues (overseas, airmail): \$36.00

QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, LONDON SE14 6PP, ENGLAND

Wholesale enquiries to: Titan Distributors. P.O. Box 250, London E3 4RT, England

A TASTE OF PARANOIA

A Look at
Hammer's
Psychological
Drama Films
1961-72

by
Keith Dudley
and
Glen Davies

Keith Dudley and Glen Davies are experts on Hammer films and studio. When not writing for the *Hammer International Journal* (for the H.I. Society), work moves on for a projected book on Hammer's unfilmed projects.

It could be said that Hammer made its name by 'cashing in' on whatever was most popular during a certain time. Between 1948 and 1955 30% of their production output was based on the more popular radio plays and serials of the day, from the Dick Barton films beginning in 1948, up to 1955 with the comedy production *The Lyons in Paris*.

From then on the company turned to television for their ideas and produced *The Quatermass Xperiment* in 1955. *Xperiment* was a runaway success and Hammer found that they could lift themselves out of the 'B' picture rut and concentrate on top class productions with world wide distribution. But even so, after the next five years of producing classic fantasy films, the team, which included Michael Carreras, director Terence Fisher and screenwriter Jimmy Sangster, once again found themselves in the inevitable rut. Michael Carreras left Hammer to form his own production company, Capricorn films and Sangster stayed with the company but decided against writing any more 'fantasy horror' scripts. He found himself 'typecast'; in the publicity ads for Berman and Bakers 1957 production he had even been billed as Jimmy 'Frankenstein' Sangster.

It was time to try something different and in 1960 after the enormous success of Alfred Hitchcock's classic *Psycho*, Sangster approached Hammer with the idea of producing a series of psychological thrillers or, as Sangster called them, 'insanity murder thrillers', thus creating within the Hammer horror format a new genre. On repeated showings the Hammer suspense films look very little like the Hitchcock film that critics compared them with; indeed, if it was not for Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Sangster's movies could be termed as pure Hammer. Although these type of films have been around since *The Spiral Staircase* only Hammer has styled them into a workable series, and some fine offerings were produced like Seth Holt's superb *Taste of Fear*, *The Nanny* and Silvio Narizzano's *Fanatic*.

The first film in the series to go into production (and scripted by Sangster) was Seth Holt's *Taste of Fear* (US: *Scream of Fear*) in 1961. The film is rarely seen these days but is easily the best in the series of James Carreras' 'mini Hitchcock thrillers'. The film tells the story of Penny Appleby, a wheel-chair cripple, who goes to visit her father in the South of France only to be told by Jane, her stepmother, that her father is away on business. Making herself at home, Penny's visit soon turns into a nightmare when she discovers the body of her father in the summerhouse and is told by her stepmother that she is seeing things. When they return to the summerhouse the body has disappeared. The following day she sees the body again and Dr. Gerard, who is a guest at the house,

believes that the car accident which left Penny a cripple has also affected her mind. But Penny has other ideas and after discovering the body again, this time floating in the swimming pool, she decides to contact the police, but is prevented by the startling developments in Sangster's script.

Taste of Fear is a highly entertaining film, with Holt getting a *tour de force* performance from Susan Strasberg as the unwitting victim of her stepmother (Jane played by Ann Todd) and Bob (the stepmother's lover, played by the late Ronald Lewis). Seth Holt, no doubt because of his training as a cutter, keeps the film going at a fast pace, aided by Douglas Slocombe's grainy monochrome photography which results in giving the film more suspense and tension than perhaps it would normally have had. For once even the critics were happy. "More than a taste, a basinful, an all out shocker" said *The Daily Express*, "If what you are after is a touch of horror in the dark then *Taste of Fear* is for you". It's a clever film with a good twist ending, stylishly directed by a master. Sadly Seth Holt never repeated the success he had with *Taste of Fear*; he returned to Hammer to direct *The Nanny* in 1965 and again in 1971 to film *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* and it was during production of the Mummy film that Holt suffered a massive heart attack and died, his place being taken by Michael Carreras.

1963 saw the second film in the series, *Maniac*, again scripted by Jimmy Sangster (who also produced) and directed by Michael Carreras. Dick Klemenson in his *Little Shoppe of Horrors* (issue 4) summed up the film nicely by saying "A boring thriller based on a Jimmy Sangster script. Don't watch this at night because you'll never be able to stay awake." As in the earlier *Taste of Fear* the story takes place in France. Georges (played by Donald Houston) escaped from a lunatic asylum with the intention of murdering his wife's lover (Kerwin Mathews). Georges, it seems, has a fetish for oxy-acetylene torches and puts them to good use during the film's 86 minute running time. Although the film has quite a few surprises and plot twists, it never gives the viewer the feeling of menace that the first film managed. The British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin* said at the time. "*Maniac* is finally and decisively trampled into dim mediocrity by the direction of Michael Carreras, with its marked absence of film sense." That sentence just about said it all for what must be the worst film in the psychological series.

A man returns home after many years of being thought dead, which causes considerable upheaval in the Ashby household, not least to Simon Ashby, who years previously murdered the brother whom the stranger now claims to be. This is the basic plot of the 1963 *Paranoic*, filmed at Bray Studios and

directed by award-winning lighting cameraman Freddie Francis. **Paranoic** is the only film in the series that can really be said to be **Psycho** inspired. Hammer's study of an organ playing lunatic who keeps the mummified corpse of his murdered younger brother's body hidden in an outhouse was long thought to be based on an original screenplay by Jimmy Sangster but in fact Sangster's name appears on the credits as sole scriptwriter. It has since been revealed that the original idea for **Paranoic** was not the product of Mr. Sangster's imagination, but was based on a 1949 novel **Brat Farrar**, written by Josephine Tey.

Brat Farrar was considered to have enough thrills and suspense to be optioned for filming in 1956 by Hammer; a script was completed and advertisements appeared in the trade journals proclaiming the forthcoming film to be "as startling as it is ingenious", but by 1960 **Brat Farrar** had still not been filmed and it appeared that the project had been abandoned. In fact the project was still very much alive, which is more than can be said for Simon Ashby's brother. Indeed under Freddie Francis' direction the viewer is left unsure if the supposed brother is the gentleman he claims to be until late in the film—whereas the novel leaves no doubt in the readers' mind that Farrar, or Tony as he is called in the film, is an imposter from the start. Who wrote the original screenplay remains a mystery but it is thought that the script was taken off the shelf sometime after 1960 and revised as a successor to **Taste of Fear**. The screenplay was then handed over to Sangster and sometime later **Paranoic** was born. Oliver Reed's bullying, pub-brawling manner and the fiery climax are all a product of the Hammer style but the basic narrative remains faithful to Josephine Tey's original conception.

Paranoic was released in 1963 to only moderate success at the box-office. It remains a forgettable film notable only for a fine performance by Oliver Reed in an otherwise poor cast that included Janette Scott and American Actor Alexander Davion. It's interesting to note here that for all the films in this mini-series, Hammer returned to the early 1950s practice of using American name actors, probably to ensure a release in the States.

Sangster now seemed to be running short of ideas and his script for **Nightmare**, again produced in 1963, returned to the basic 'now you see the body, now you don't' type film. Although **Nightmare** was well directed by Freddie Francis it just didn't have enough suspense to hold the audience in the way that the earlier **Taste of Fear** did. The very thin plot has the obligatory evil guardian/stepmother trying to drive a young girl insane in order to collect her share of an inheritance, but the story was so shallow



that the audience knew exactly how the film would end five minutes after the start.

1965 saw a completely different psychological drama from Hammer, different because it was the first in the series to be filmed in full colour and it didn't have a script by Jimmy Sangster. Hammer employed American writer Richard Matheson to adapt Anne Blaisdale's novel **Nightmare** into a workable screenplay; the result was **Fanatic** (USA **Die, Die My Darling**). A young girl visits the mother of her dead fiancé only to discover that mother is a religious psychotic who wants the girl to go through a mock wedding ceremony and join her son in paradise, but the young lady doesn't want to know, much to the disgust of the old lady. Veteran American actress Tallulah Bankhead barnstormed her way through the film as Mrs. Trefoil (the lunatic mother) but sadly Stephanie Powers was thoroughly miscast as the bride-to-be, and couldn't match up to Miss Bankhead's performance.

There were some nice supporting performances, notably from a very young Donald Sutherland as a lunatic odd-job man (in fact most of the staff employed at the house were mentally deranged in one way or another!). What made **Fanatic** different from its predecessors was the fact that there were no plot twists, no actual surprises and no real climax. It was a straight forward modern day adaptation of a gothic mystery story competently directed by Silvio Narizzano.

Freddie Francis returned to the company in 1965 to direct what was to be the last of his trilogy of psychological thrillers, **Hysteria**. Again scripted by Jimmy Sangster, it suffered not through lack of imagination (as in **Nightmare** or **Maniac**) but because of too much. The plot was so intricate and complicated that it left the viewer non-plussed, with so many loose ends left hanging no one quite knew what had happened.

Released in England in June 1965, **Hysteria** attempted to tell the story of Christopher Smith, an American, who is suffering from amnesia after being involved in a road accident. Smith is discharged from hospital by his psychiatrist, Dr. Keller, and sets up house in a luxurious London flat that has been paid for by an anonymous benefactor. In reality, this is Dr. Keller who, through the intricacies of the script, has murdered his wife so that he can marry his mistress Denise. The body of Keller's wife is left in the flat's bathroom so that the murder can be pinned onto Smith who, unbeknown to Keller, has now regained his memory ... Confused!? You will be.

The opening scenes of **Hysteria** seem quite promising, with director Freddie Francis using his camera technique to good advantage and creating an atmosphere of sheer terror as Smith struggles to remember his past life; but,



Facing page (top) Oliver Reed pulls out all the stops in *Paranoic*; (middle and bottom) Donald Sutherland and Tallulah Bankhead compare knives in *Fanatic*. Right: (top) Stephanie Powers collapses and (middle) Sutherland creeps subtly in *Fanatic*; (bottom) Ralph Bates, Judy Geeson and Joan Collins in a quiet moment from *Fear in the Night*.



because the plot is so involved, the atmosphere is completely lost. A shame, because this could have been a very good film. A good cast struggled to make something of it but it was a hopeless task, with Maurice Denham (as Hemmings, a down at heel, seedy private detective) stealing the film from everybody.

1965 will probably go down in Hammer's history as the year they persuaded one of Hollywood's biggest stars to appear in one of their films. Miss Bette Davis accepted the lead role in Jimmy Sangster's adaptation of Evelyn Piper's novel *The Nanny*, but only on condition that it would be directed by Seth Holt. *The Nanny* turned out to be a minor classic because of Miss Davis' acting ability and Holt's masterly direction; and with a very strong supporting cast. The production just couldn't fail, and indeed the critics raved over the film when it was released in October of 1965. Miss Davis played the part of a children's nanny who isn't quite right in the head and who has a peculiar talent for inducing people to commit suicide or to bring about heart attacks, as in the case of Jill Bennett. William Dix played Joey, the little boy who Nanny looks after, and was superb in his debut acting role; he is the only one who realises that Nanny isn't the ideal babysitter.

Seth Holt was again acclaimed for his work on *The Nanny*, and it was his direction rather than Sangster's script that made it into the minor classic it is regarded as today.

The Nanny saw the end of the first cycle of *Psycho*-inspired productions and it wasn't until 1970 that another film surfaced; Alan Gibson's *Crescendo*. As in earlier productions of this type, Jimmy Sangster supplied the script, which appeared to left over from the 1960s. With the relaxation of censorship in the 70s, the film seemed to be an appropriate vehicle for nudity and drug abuse, but in fact the only notable thing(s) about the film is Stephanie Powers showing a hell of a lot more than she ever did in the abysmal T.V. show *Hart to Hart*, and I'm not talking about acting ability. A total waste of time, money and acting ability.

Hammer's last two suspense films were made back to back at Elstree Studios in late 1972. It was the idea of Michael Carreras to release both films, *Fear in the Night* and *Straight on till Morning*, as a double bill under the collective title of *Women in Fear*. The double bill release was not a success, in fact neither film stood a chance at the box-office as EMI, the distributors, withdrew them from release after only three weeks on the circuit.

Straight on till Morning is a good example of a director (Peter Collinson) trying to make something out of a script which was probably not there, resulting in an utter failure of a workable idea which, in itself, shows a complete inability to



(Top) Susan Strasberg gets *A Taste of Fear*;
(bottom) Peter Vaughan advances
menacingly, armed with knife and sandwich
in *Fanatic*.



understand what the genre means. **Fear in the Night**, on the other hand, clearly shows that Sangster, who wrote the script, directed and produced, is a master at creating suspense out of what is basically old hat.

Straight on till Morning and Fear in the Night

"Both films study a woman in fear, a fear created when faced with the loneliness and eventual terror in the jungle that is life in the big city today".

Michael Carreras.

A good workable idea one would think, but Peter Collinson had different ideas and saw **Straight on till Morning** as being full of pathos mixed with terror. More importantly he also saw the film as more than just a fear picture: "I hope to give it a documentary flavour by having the camera observe rather than me direct". This attempt at making the film more *up market* just fails, as the plot is too far removed from normal life to film as a kitchen sink drama. Collinson has his camera linger on the things we actually go to the cinema to get away from – the sleazy world of bed-sitters and Wimpy bars is hardly entertaining and, even on the lowest level the film fails. As a case book study of loneliness the plot plods on; things happen to the leading character, horrible things but we just don't care. Brenda Thompson (Rita Tushingham) does not earn our sympathy, or even our sorrow; she is just not real enough for that. If there is anything valid in John Peacock's script it is lost in Collinson's hands, for he misjudges the length of many scenes, forcing any interest into the ground and making what seems to be a simple story (and a human interest story at that) into a seemingly endless stream of camera images held together by the thinnest of plots. Aside from Collinson's documentary approach, the film also suffers from being based on a stage play (most scenes are shot on three or four sets) whilst the location shots are of no real value other than showing us that this is happening today. What we have here is at best an indifferent story, badly filmed by a director whose talents and judgement are in question. The one good thing, and perhaps in a small way a saving grace for the film, is its performance from Shane Bryant as Peter, who injects more sympathy than Rita Tushingham's ineptly played Brenda (who is after all the heroine). Her role is, to be sure, an actor's role, needing more style and ability than she can give. Little else can be said of this film; it does not thrill or entertain and in the main bores its viewers.

If **Straight on till Morning** is a modern suspense film then one must only praise Jimmy Sangster for making **Fear in the Night** a good old fashioned fear film. Sangster understands this genre, although he did make a mess of a few

films during the 60s, and knows not to mess around with such trendy ideas as documentary fantasy. Where Collinson goes for realism to the point of losing his audience Sangster opts for atmosphere and stylishly built up thrills, whilst still retaining the all-important factor of believability, and this is the main difference in their respective styles. Sangster's script is not aimed at realism but concerns itself with a suspenseful tale that gets you interested in something that is unlikely to every really happen but whilst you watch it on the screen is pretty damned believable.

Fear in the Night tells of newly wed Peggy Heller who has recently recovered from a nervous breakdown. She is attacked in her room one night while waiting for her husband (Robert) to return home. He has been given a new job as assistant headmaster at a boys' school in the country and it is here that Peggy will be going to live; but because of her recent illness neither her landlady nor her husband call the police after the attack because they believe the assailant with the artificial arm that she talks of exists only in her mind.

Peggy and Robert drive out to the country school and are given a cottage to live in, and, though Peggy likes her new home, she remains uneasy, for everything is so clean and quiet that she finds it difficult to believe that any boys attend the school.

Whilst walking round the empty school she comes across the headmaster, who seems nice enough if a little odd, and as Peggy leaves she fails to notice that the headmaster has an artificial arm. She wanders back to the cottage thinking that Robert has returned from a trip to London, and she enters the house only to be attacked by the unknown man again. Later when Robert hears of this he advises her once again not to call in the police.

When walking in the woods the following day Peggy comes across a wild rabbit which is suddenly shot and killed only a few inches away from her. Molly Carmichael comes out of hiding and picks up the dead animal, they exchange a few words but Peggy takes an instant dislike to her and her hideous sculptures that she later sees. Peggy is now so nervous of being left alone that Robert has to leave his shotgun; soon after there is another attack, but this time Peggy manages to shoot the man before running into the school. On opening the door however she finds nothing but a tape recorder. The headmaster returns, enters the room, and she sees his false arm – in terror she shoots him.

On Robert's return he is unable to get Peggy to speak, so goes to see Molly (we learn they are lovers, who plan to have Peggy removed from the scene) and he reveals that he is not in fact a teacher but a mental nurse to the headmaster. He explains that the school has had no pupils

for the last five years since a fire destroyed Michael Carmichael's sanity and his left arm. Robert and Molly need to know where the headmaster is and, after attempting to break her silence with threats, they decide to kill Peggy and leave a suicide note which will admit her guilt of killing the head. They are interrupted by the ringing of the school bell and realise that Michael must still be alive. In the chaos that follows Robert mistakenly kills Molly and Peggy ends up trapped in the gym by her husband, who is about to kill her when he is attacked and killed by Michael. The headmaster had known of the plot all along and had replaced the cartridges in Peggy's gun with blanks. Later Peggy is questioned by the police outside the school but is too shocked to say anything; from inside the school comes the sound of boys singing.

At its worst *Fear in the Night* is a cliché-ridden affair, with the headmaster being nothing but a red herring. Robert's opportune visits away from the school every time the false armed man strikes does not keep us guessing for long, and one knows who the attacker is long before Sangster decides to show us. How many times have trimmings such as this been used on film? Seth Holt's *Taste of Fear* concerned itself with the same thing (people trying to drive other people insane) but it does not matter if you do guess who the villain is since the film has much to offer, particularly in its performance of Judy Geeson. Ralph Bates and the old master himself Peter Cushing are excellent although Joan Collins leaves a lot to be desired. Arthur Grant's camera wanders smoothly through Don Picton's wonderfully lit sets creating added tension to the narrative and Sangster handles his team with care and style, making a cliché-ridden story into a highly successful blend of mounting fear and well written characters.

(N.B. *Fear in the Night* was based on a script that Sangster had written for Hammer in the mid sixties, *The Claw*, which was basically the same story but took place on a river boat moored on the Thames.)

So there you have it: ten films based on the same theme ... *insanity and murder*. Although many other production companies produced films of the same type during the same period (notably Amicus and William Castle) only Hammer managed to make them into a workable series, even if the majority of them were bad.

Alfred Hitchcock and *Psycho* had a lot to answer for and it will be interesting to see if *Psycho II* has the same effect again on the film industry.

Hammer fans can look forward to the continuation of *The History of Hammer - 1965 to 1966 with Dracula, Prince of Darkness and One Million Years BC* in issue 27.

HAMMER'S PSYCHO MOVIES

checklist

Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: Arthur Grant, Mus: Elisabeth Lutyens, Ed: James Needs.
A Universal release. 80 mins.

Nightmare (1963)

David Knight (as *Henry Baxter*), Moira Redmond (as *Grace Maddox*), Jennie Linden (as *Janet*), Brenda Bruce (as *Mary Lewis*), George A. Cooper (as *John*) with Irene Richmond, John Welsh and Timothy Bateson.
Dir: Freddie Francis, Prod/Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: John Wilcox, Mus: Don Banks.
Ed: James Needs.
A Universal release in Hammerscope. 82 mins.

Fanatic (USA: Die, Die, My Darling!) (1965)

Tatiana Bankhead (as *Mrs Trefail*), Stephanie Powers (as *Patricia Carroll*), Peter Vaughan (as *Harry*), with Maurice Kaufman, Yootha Joyce, Donald Sutherland and Gwendolyn Watts.
Dir: Silvio Narizzano, Prod: Anthony Hinds.
Scr: from the novel *Nightmare* by Anne Blaisdell, by Richard Matheson, Ph: Arthur Ibbotson, Mus: Wilfred Josephs, Ed: James Needs and John Dunford, Make-up: Roy Ashton and Richard Mills, Exec Prod: Michael Carreras.
A Columbia release. 98 mins. (orig. 105 mins.). 9 mins. cut by BBFC.

Hysteria (1965)

Robert Webber (as *Smith*), Lelia Goldoni (as *Denise*), Anthony Newlands (as *Keller*), Jennifer Jayne (as *Gina*), Maurice Denham (as *Hemmings*).
Dir: Freddie Francis, Prod/Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: John Wilcox, Mus: Don Banks.
Ed: James Needs.
An M.G.M. release. 85 mins.

The Nanny (1965)

Bette Davis (as *Nanny*), Wendy Craig (as *Virginia*), Jill Bennett (as *Pensel*), James Villiers (as *Bill Fane*), Maurice Denham (as *Dr. Beames*), William Dix (as *Joey*), Pamela Franklin (as *Bobby*) with Jack Watling and Alfred Burke.
Dir: Seth Holt, Prod/Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: Harry Waxman, Mus: Richard Rodney Bennett, Ed: James Needs and Tom Simpson, Exec Prod: Anthony Hinds.
A Warner Pathe release. 93 mins.

Crescendo (1970)

Stephanie Powers (as *Susan Roberts*), James Olsen (as *Georges Jacques*), Margaretta Scott (as *Danielle Ryman*), Jane Lapotaire (as *Lillianne*), Jess Ackland (as *Carter*), Kirsten Betts (as *Catherine*).
Dir: Alan Gibson, Prod: Michael Carreras, Scr: Jimmy Sangster and Alfred Shaugnessy, Ph: Paul Beeson, Mus: Malcolm Williamson, Ed: Chris Barnes.
A Warner Pathe release. 95 mins.

Straight On Till Morning (1972)

Rita Tushingham (as *Brenda*), Shane Briant (as *Peter*), Tom Bell (as *Jimmy Lindsay*), Annie Ross (as *Liz*), Katy Wyeth (as *Caroline*), James Bolam (as *Joey*) with Clara Kelly and Harold Berens.
Dir: Peter Collinson, Prod: Roy Skeggs, Scr: Michael Peacock, Ph: Brian Probyn, Mus: Roland Shaw, Ed: Alan Pettillo, Exec Prod: Michael Carreras.
An M.G.M. release. 96 mins.

Fear in the Night (1972)

Judy Geeson (as *Peggy Heller*), Ralph Bates (as *Robert Heller*), Peter Cushing (as *Michael Carmichael*), Joan Collins (as *Molly Carmichael*), with Gillian Lind and James Cossins.
Dir/Prod/Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: Arthur Grant, Mus: John McCabe, Ed: Peter Weatherly, Exec Prod: Michael Carreras.
An M.G.M. release. 86 mins.

Taste of Fear (USA: Scream of Fear) (1961)

Susan Strasberg (as *Penny Appleby*), Ronald Lewis (as *Bob*), Ann Todd (as *Jane Appleby*), Christopher Lee (as *Dr. Gerard*).
Dir: Seth Holt, Prod/Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: Douglas Slocombe, Mus: Clifton Parker, Ed: James Needs, Exec Prod: Michael Carreras.
A Columbia release. 82 mins.

Maniac (1963)

Kerwin Mathews (as *Geoff Farrell*), Nadia Grey (as *Evel*), Donald Houston (as *Georges*), Lilliane Brouse (as *Annette*).
Dir: Michael Carreras, Prod/Writ: Jimmy Sangster, Ph: Wilkie Cooper, Ed: James Needs.
A Columbia release. 86 mins.

Paranoic (1963)

Oliver Reed (as *Simon*), Janette Scott (as *Eleanor*), Alexander Davion (as *Tony*), Maurice Denham (as *John Kossett*), Sheila Burrell (as *Harriet*), John Bonney (as *Kelth Kossett*) with Liliane Brouse, Colin Tapley and Sydney Bromley.
Dir: Freddie Francis, Prod: Anthony Hinds.

CLASSIC GORE

Reviews:

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

DEATH TRAP

HALLOWEEN

DERANGED

FRIDAY THE 13th

Review by John Fleming

The British film censor calls it "an exploitation film which is about terror".

The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre has been banned in this country. But it has been drawing the crowds in the US with a poster that says AMERICA'S MOST BIZARRE AND BRUTAL CRIMES — WHAT HAPPENED IS TRUE. NOW THE MOTION PICTURE THAT'S JUST AS REAL—WHO WILL SURVIVE AND WHAT WILL BE LEFT OF THEM?

Its first British screening was at a British Film Institute members-only show during last year's London Film Festival. Ken Wlaschin, festival director, had doubts about screening it: "For sheer horror and fright, the film makes *Psycho* look tame."

The movie opens with a black screen. On the soundtrack there are crunching, bone-crushing sounds. A flash of a skeleton on the screen. Then back to black. A flash of pulped flesh. Black. A crumbling hand. Black. A mangled corpse. Black. Black and quick intercut flashes of decomposing bodies.

Then a beautiful summer day. Crisp, clear, clean photography. With a voice on the radio talking about grave-robberies. There are corpses missing. And then we see two sweaty, decomposing bodies apparently impaled on a pointed graveyard obelisk.

Then the credits.

The rim of the sun seen through a red filter. Sunspots. Enormous flames leaping up off the surface of the sun. With the credits printed neatly over them.

Then mix to the full yellow orb of the sun.

And a dead armadillo.

And there are these five carefree young people. Two all-American boys. Two all-American girls. And Franklin, a big fat slob in a wheelchair who's in the film to be laughed at.

At this point in a horror film, you'd expect someone to say, "Hey, Harry, there's something wrong with the radio." Instead, one of the girls sets up the traditional sense of unease by talking about the malevolent formation of the planets. Saturn's in a bad position, man. It's going to be a rotten day.

And that rotten day starts when they pick up an evil-looking, mentally-retarded hitch-hiker who starts talking about slaughterhouses. "My family's always been in meat," he says.

He develops a liking for Franklin's knife. He takes it and cuts open his palm. Then he takes out a razor and slashes Franklin's forearm. The horrified all-American kids throw out their hitch-hiker. He daubs his blood on the side of their van. Shades of *Race With the Devil*.

Looking in an astrology magazine, the youngsters discover that—yes—it's going to be an unpredictable day.

Franklin's arm is bandaged.

The youngsters stop at a gas station and ask directions to "The Old Franklin Place". The gas station owner's eyes widen as if they'd asked for Dracula's Castle. "The Old Franklin Place?" he gasps.

But they do find it. And two of the

youngsters, Kirk and Pam, wander over to a neighbouring farm through a field of sunflowers. Artistic, huh? At the farm, they find two 'W's, an American sedan and a truck hidden undercover. (Remember the literal car pool in *Psycho*?) Oh, they also find a human tooth on the porch.

Kirk, who obviously hasn't seen *Psycho*, goes into the house. There's the snuffling, squealing, odd sound of a pig. And on the wall are not *Psycho*'s stuffed birds but mounted animal heads. And then a hammer smashes through Kirk's skull and he shudders and shakes, dying on the floor as the killer drags him off.

Pam, obviously none too intelligent, approaches the house. And goes inside. She trips up and falls into a room.

The floor is covered with thousands of feathers. Human bones. Skulls. Hands. Legs. Arms. Dangling around the room. And a hen in a budgie's cage. She's in the murderer's workshop. She turns, screaming. She's grabbed by a man. He lifts her and takes her to a large, gleaming, curved-steel butcher's hook. He hangs her up absent-mindedly, the hook going in her back and up inside her body. As she hangs there screaming, he picks up a powersaw and bends over Kirk's dead body. He starts to sever the limbs.

Meanwhile, back at The Old Franklin Place, Sally and Jerry and Franklin offer a bit of light relief. Then Jerry, who has obviously read the script thoroughly, wanders off across the fields towards a very large sun, low in the sky. Remember the planets? Sally and Franklin are left talking about the malevolence of Saturn and, well, all the planets. It's a pretty unpredictable day so far, huh?

Anyway, Jerry eventually comes to the same farm that Kirk and Pam found. He knows they've been there because of a coat left on the porch. And he hears strange gurgling-laughing sounds coming from inside the house. A sound that's a cross between a whine and a screech.

He must be pretty dumb. He goes into the house. Would you go in?

There's this hammering sound coming from the freezer. Jerry opens the lid. Pam, twitching in death, springs up out of the freezer.

Jerry turns to run away and our friendly maniac puts a hammer through his skull.

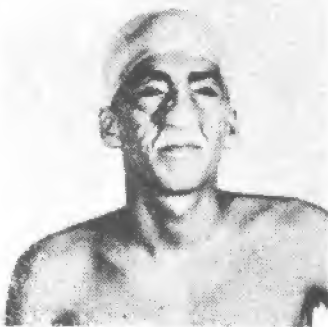
Now comes, as you might have guessed, quiet interlude time.

We see the white moon up in the black sky. This tells us it's night-time and reminds us about those malevolent heavenly bodies.

There's only Sally and Franklin left back at the old place now. And they're beginning to wonder where their friends have got to. Especially since their friends have the ignition keys for the van.

So off Sally and Franklin go through the undergrowth looking for the others. Sally walking. Franklin in his wheelchair. The trouble is, Franklin thinks there's someone watching them, someone near them. Franklin turns round and this maniac plunges a chain-saw into his chest. Plunges it in again. And again. And again. And again. The saw vibrating from side to side.

Sally runs off, screaming. The maniac chases her, sawing his way through the undergrowth. When he can't hack off human limbs, he obviously makes do with



Transforming 20-year old John Dugan into a man over 100 years old took over 200 working hours. Dugan's hair was wrapped with gauze then a bald cap applied. A thin latex mask shredded provided major wrinkles. Plaster models of his teeth were made to fit over his real teeth to look like gums. Finally make-up and hair shreds were applied on face, hands and neck.



tree limbs and saplings.

The chase is on and it ends up at the maniac's white house (surely not politics again?). Sally rushes inside and slams the door behind her. The maniac saws through it.

Sally rushes upstairs and finds an old couple in rocking chairs. But they're both decomposing. And their pet dog is just a skeleton with an animal hide thrown over it. The maniac is gaining on her.

She jumps through the first floor window. The maniac rushes downstairs. And the chase is on again. Through the undergrowth, Sally screaming. The maniac following with his buzzing chain-saw.

Sally runs until she gets back to the gas station. (Remember the gas station?) The owner is inside. She screams incoherently at him. He looks outside and says there's no-one there. He goes off to get a truck to take her to town. But he leaves the door open and Sally is alone. She looks at the open door and . . .

Nothing happens.

Until the gasman comes back with his truck.

Plus a sack and a rope. He walks towards her.

Sally screams and picks up a knife.

He knocks it from her hand, then starts hitting and beating her up with a broom. He binds and gags her and puts the sack over her head. He bundles her into the truck's cab and then . . .

He remembers the light's still on in the gas station. So back he goes to switch it off. He returns to the truck cab saying to the semi-conscious, hysterically whining Sally, "The cost of electricity's enough to drive a man out of business."

He drives off, occasionally prodding Sally with a stick and baring his teeth a lot.

As he approaches the maniac's house, he sees a figure on the road. Guess who. It's . . . the hitch-hiker again. Good old Hitch. The gasman gets out of the truck and starts beating up Hitch. "I told you to stay away from that graveyard!" he shouts, as he beats as he screams.

It turns out that the gasman and Hitch and the chain-saw maniac are all one big happy family. But a family tiff ensues because the chain-saw maniac had mused up the front door trying to get at Sally.

Hitch ties Sally to a chair. Then Hitch and Chainsawman go upstairs to collect one of the decomposing bodies in the rocking chairs. It's grandpa. The family that slays together stays together.

They bring him down to meet Sally.

Chainsawman picks up a knife and cuts her finger. Grandpa turns out to be alive after a fashion. And a very old fashion it is. He starts sucking her blood. Sally faints.

At this point, re-enter the moon with another pause to show the passage of time. And remind us of those nasty planets.

When Sally regains consciousness, she sees a dead armadillo, a human skull, three screaming maniacs and grandpa. The scene is tastefully lit by a dangling lightbulb inside a decomposing head.

Hitch starts insulting gasman by saying he's just the cook. Gasman replies philosophically, "There are some things you gotta do. Don't mean you gotta like it." (A variation on "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.")

The family decide to give Sally to

grandpa: "He's the best killer that ever was. Did 60 in 5 minutes once."

They put a hammer in his hand and drag Sally over. But—butterfingers—he keeps dropping the hammer. Although he does manage the occasional glancing blow and one direct, bloody hit to the back of the skull.

But Sally gets free and jumps out the window, pursued by Hitch and Chainsawman. Hitch trots happily behind her, slashing her in the back with his razor.

The film ends soon afterwards.

After the *Texas Chain-Saw Massacre* screening, the British film censor said there were plans to film a real-life fight-to-the-death between a man and a shark. The cage was already being built in the Pacific. The man has been promised \$1 million. If he loses, it goes to his next of kin.

The Roman emperors arranged spectacles of death too.

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974)

Marilyn Burns (as Sally), Allen Danziger (as Jerry), Paul A. Partain (as Franklyn), William Vail (as Kirk), Teri McMinn (as Pam), Edwin Neal (as The Hitch-hiker), Jim Siedow (as The Old Man), Gunnar Hansen (as Leatherface), John Dugan (as Grandfather), Jerry Lorenz (as The Truck Driver).

Dir:Pro: Tobe Hooper, Scr: Kim Henkel and Tobe Hooper, Ph: Daniel Pearl, Ed: Sallye Richardson and Larry Carroll, Mus: Tobe Hooper and Wayne Bell.

A Brynston Picture. Cert: X (London) 87 mins.

DEATH TRAP

Review by David Pirie

Just about everything surrounding The *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the debut movie of Tobe Hooper, has made some kind of history. Juicy anecdotes surround it like fleas: the set swam in vomit and blood, he was nearly lynched by the cast during shooting, an actress was ordered to work until she fainted from exhaustion. Even now at least one actor has sworn he will kill Hooper if he ever sees him again. The film itself became a legend: picked for the exclusive Critic's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival it made a small fortune and attracted controversy wherever it was shown, including a knock-down drag-out preview debate at London's National Film Theatre from which few of the participants emerged with credit. But as a *film*, Texas seemed to work in inverse proportion to the seriousness with which it was treated. Taken on any level except humour it doesn't add up to anything very much; but as a kind of souped-up horror comedy in which every character was more revolting than the next, including (especially) the victims, Texas was a novelty. It took the 'woman-in-jeopardy' theme about as far as it could go, and exulted in decay with all the lurid enthusiasm and relish of an EC horror comic.

Death Trap, Tobe Hooper's new movie was unveiled at the Cannes Film Festival in 1976 and it seems to prove the point that Hooper is far closer to William M. Gaines

than George Romero. In fact all the evidence suggests that *Death Trap* was partly inspired by an EC story, a Jack Davis swamp-horror opus in the January 'Haunt of Fear' for 1954 called *Country Clubbing*. The setting and central character are identical and the film is very recognisably set in EC's decaying swamp-land, peopled with degenerate cretins, crumbling broken-down shacks and hungry alligators.

The budget is obviously low but Hooper makes up for it by the same device he used in *Texas* of transforming the entire action into one impossibly prolonged shock/horror climax.

When some colleagues of mine turned up for the last twenty minutes, and said they were glad to see the climax, I had difficulty in explaining to them that the entire film was exactly like that. It was *all* climax!

There is no real plot to speak of. A prostitute is thrown out of the local whorehouse for not behaving herself and finds herself in the heart of the swampland with nowhere to go for help except to a decaying shack which turns out, laughably, to be an ancient motel. The set, specially built in Hollywood, looks spectacular if tiny; a dark hulk of a building surrounded by blackened trees and knee-high mist. The lecherous owner makes a pass at the girl and then wastes no time in making her the first of a long string of victims for which he utilises anything to hand, especially his long scythe and the friendly alligator under the porch. Gradually, for unexplained reasons, other visitors arrive at the motel including an ugly couple with a repulsive child. In line with *Texas* few of these people have any redeeming features, and the young husband in particular is a timorous psychotic creep. All of them fall victim to their host who gibbers and raves his way through the movie, turning up the radio in the hall to hide the screams and moving at a crouched lolloping run, brandishing the sharp and lethal scythe. One woman is tied up in the small room, others fall foul (in close-up) of the scythe or the alligator. Only the little girl manages to crawl underneath the house where she remains, screaming her head off, as the alligator snaps at her more interesting limbs.

Help is at hand in the unlikely form of Stuart Whitman, playing the local sheriff, but his intervention does not come till the last few minutes by which time few characters remain and the little girl is impaled on the top of a fence only inches away from the alligator's clicking jaws. Finally the old man becomes a victim of his pet and only his artificial limb breaks the surface of the water in a neat and explicit reference to the legend of Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*.

As this last touch suggests *Death Trap* is very much a kid's movie for adults (though it will be interesting to see what certificate it gets in the more lenient climate of America). Hooper quarreled violently with his producer and is reported to be



Death Trap, top: Victim Carolyn Jones; centre: *Death Trapper* Neville Brand; below: on receiving end of Brand's scythe, victim Mel Ferrer.



unhappy with the way the film was edited. It probably won't help his career, but certainly deserves a showing.

DEATH TRAP (1976)

Neville Brand (as Judd), Stuart Whitman (Sheriff Martin), Carolyn Jones (Miss Hattie), Mel Ferrer (Harvey Wood), William Finley (Roy), with Crystin Sinclair, Roberta Collins, Robert Englund, Janis Lynn and Kyle Richards. Directed by Tobe Hooper, Produced by Mardi Rustam, Co-Produced by Al Fast, Executive Producer Mohammed Rustam. No British Certificate

DERANGED

Review by John Fleming

The British Board of Film Censors didn't like it at all.

Towards the end of *Deranged*, a naked girl is hung upside down. She is suspended from the roof of a barn by ropes tied around her ankles. The killer then inserts a knife into her and, starting at the top, slits her open. The blood flows down over her breasts and the censor's heart skipped a beat.

Blood flowing on breasts is a 'trigger image' for rapists. The whole sequence has been cut out of the film.

Deranged is a rather mundane title considering it comes from the team that unleashed *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things*. Alan Ormsby, co-scripter, star and ghoul make-up expert on *Children*, scripted, made-up and co-directed (with Jeff Gillen) *Deranged*.

Presumably Jeff Gillen is the Jeffrey Gillen who co-starred in *Children*. Jack McGowan photographed both films.

And the fact that *Children's* co-producer was Gary Goch, while *Deranged's* assistant director were Ken Goch and Martin Gillen makes it seem as if there's a ghoulish collection of friends somewhere in middle America.

The film is based on the same real-life incident that inspired *Psycho* and the banned *Texas Chain-Saw Massacre*. Handyman Ed Gein was arrested in 1957 after mutilating, murdering, mummifying, eating and generally not being nice to local people.

Deranged, an otherwise superb little film, opens with an awful in-vision narrator who claims to be Tom Sims (the credits say he's Leslie Carlson), a newspaper columnist who covered the real events. This film isn't for the squeamish; as he says, "Nothing has been left to the imagination."

Simple Ezra Cobb (played by Roberts Blossom) is a two-bit American farmer who looks like a cross between Sir Bernard Miles and a Dachau victim. His paralysed mother is dying. Women are vermin, she tells him. The wages of sin are a nasty social disease. Don't trust any woman except Maureen Selby — she's fat.

And fat is friendly.

Ezra ladles an obnoxious green soup into his mother's mouth. She starts choking. The green bile-like soup bubbles from her mouth then turns blood red. Momma is dead.

And buried. But Ezra can't cope. He gives up farming, his mind gone. He becomes a local handyman. A year later, he hears his mother's voice telling him to bring her home.

He digs up her coffin. There she is. Her face, her clothes, everything exactly as it was in life. She's even faintly smiling. He happily clasps her white-gloved hand – and her arm comes off. Ezra reels back and sees his mother as she really is – a decomposed, sickly pulp.

He takes her home, lays her on her old bed and kneels beside her. "I'll have to put you back together like that old egg in the fairy tale," he says. The camera pans across the room. There, standing in the corridor, is the narrator. He explains Ezra decided to use real skin for the repatching.

The narrator ruins the film, but don't blame the British distributors. They have wisely cut out as much of him as possible. Pity they couldn't cut out his tongue. We can only assume he is some attempted joke that misfires. Because, in fact, *Deranged* is intentionally a very, very funny movie.

The film is amazingly believable. Whereas *The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre* is just plain silly, *Deranged* is effectively humorous, nasty and, in some places, sexy. All the characters are superbly underplayed, particularly a magnificently lecherous drunk, and Roberts Blossom's central performance as Ezra. He is a great re-actor. He wanders through the film with a slightly puzzled expression on his face. He's a perfectly frank, open, innocent simpleton and sadist.

Throughout the movie he tells his neighbours exactly what he is doing, but they won't believe him. Oh, what a hoot, they say. Old Ezra's going to dig up his ex-Sunday School teacher because his dead mother needs a new face. He's a one, that Ezra. Ho ho ho.

Ezra dons his boater and pinstripe suit to visit fat and friendly Maureen Selby. He confides in her; he says he talks to his mother.

"Mr Cobb, are you making fun of me?" Maureen asks.

"No, ma'am," says Ezra, who would never dream of lying.

Well you see, says Maureen, she talks to Herbert her husband. He was burned to death in a car accident. Say, why don't we have a four-way seance? Herbert's never met Mrs Cobb. Ezra goes home to mother and tells her he likes chubby women but is afraid he might get stuck in all that fat and he doesn't think Maureen is 'all there – you know – upstairs.'

But he goes back to see her for the seance. Herbert's spirit speaks through Maureen. It says that, being disembodied,

it misses the – uhm – 'carnal aspect' of marriage. Perhaps Ezra can help? "Make my wife a woman again," says Herbert. Maureen unbuttons her gown.

Ezra decides he does like fat women and they go off to the bedroom but he's not quite sure what to do. Then he remembers the wages of sin, that nasty social disease and how all women are vermin. Maureen unbuttons Ezra's shirt and finds a gun. He can feel his finger on the trigger. He blasts two bullets through her head, then takes her home to his mother for companionship.

Ezra's next victim is Mary Ransom, a sensuous young barmaid whom he lures to his isolated house. When she enters his home, alone, she finds cluttered, uncleaned chaos, animal bones and a stuffed bird. She hears a squealing noise and goes into a small room. On the floor she sees a decomposing skull. Staggering back, she stumbles across a group of five corpses wearing granny-dresses, sitting in chairs with tea-cups on their laps. Then she sees one of the corpses is alive. It's Ezra wearing a dress, wig and face-mask of dried human skin. Mary tries to escape but is caught and is treated to tea-time with the various decomposing bodies Ezra has collected. He has decided to marry Mary. He plays music on a drum made of belly-skin using a leg-bone as a drumstick. "I'm just tryin' to show you I got talents," he says.

After a bit of fondle and fumble, Mary manages to smash Ezra on the head with a bottle and tries unsuccessfully to escape. He races after her in slow motion. Part of the chase has been cut by the British distributors because, they say, "it looked bloody silly."

Mary is caught and Ezra bludgeons her very, very bloodily to death with his musical leg-bone. He honestly tells his two closest neighbours that the Mary Ransom reported missing is really dead in his house with his old Sunday School teacher, his mother and a few other corpses. But they don't believe him. However, they do begin to worry when he kills their son's girlfriend. Incidentally, as Ezra gets sicker, his girl victims get younger.

Young Sally works in the local huntin', shootin', fishin' and tomato ketchup store. One day, alone with her, Ezra loads one of the rifles lying about and aims it at her. She smiles at him then crashes onto the floor as the bullet hits her.

He takes Sally (wounded on the temple) back towards his place in his truck but she escapes in the woods. Her boyfriend and his father are hunting in these woods. There are traps set everywhere. As a terrified Sally runs and stumbles through the forest, one of the steel traps snaps shut on her ankle. Ezra is coming – she can hear him.

She hides in the bushes. Ezra sees the chain attached to the trap. He pulls on the chain and the trap's steel jaws pull Sally out by the ankle. Ezra raises his gun and

fires. This time Sally is very dead.

By now, her friends have discovered that she is missing and that Ezra was the last person to see her. They rush out to the farm where they discover that both Ezra and the British Censor have been cutting out some very, very nasty bits and pieces.

Deranged is a joy. Strictly for sick lovers of the grotesque, Tommy Cooper or Les Dawson. Not at all a spoof horror film but a totally straight terror picture whose horrors and underplayed, unemphasised humour lift it well above the normal exploitation movie.

DERANGED (1974)

Leslie Carlson (as *The Narrator*), Roberts Blossom (as *Ezra Cobb*) with Maureen Selby, Mary Ransom and Cosette Lee.

Prod: Tom Karr, Dir: Jeff Gillen and Alan Ormsby, Scr: Alan Ormsby, Ph: Jack McGowan, Sp. Effects: Alan Ormsby and Tom Savini.

An American-International Picture. Cert: X 79 mins (82 in US)

HALLOWEEN

Review by Anthony Tate

Halloween is the illegitimate son of *Psycho*. Not everyone is prepared to admit this, but facts are facts. Of all the psycho-slasher films in recent years, *Halloween* remains not only the best of the bunch, but also the most original in its approach. Nobody knew, least of all University of Southern California graduate John Carpenter, that his film would go on to gross in excess of 50 million dollars on a negative cost of 320,000 dollars, thereby making it the most profitable independent production of all time.

Previously Carpenter had played a major part in the making of a short, *The Resurrection of Bronco Billy*, which went on to win an Academy Award in 1970 and had completed a film at U.S.C. with classmate Dan O'Bannon entitled *Dark Star*. This was later fleshed out to feature length and shown at Filmex in 1974. Bad distribution however allowed the film to drift into near obscurity until later years and it took his next film, the superb *Assault on Precinct 13*, to break the ice. Ignored in the United States, it was hailed by the critics at the London Film Festival in 1977 and Irwin Yablans, who released *Assault* in America, was in attendance. He offered Carpenter an idea which he called *The Babysitter Murders* and he accepted, turning it into what we all know now to be *Halloween*.

The basic premise of the story revolves around one Michael Myers, who in 1963 at the age of six, brutally kills his sister Judith. Coming out of it in a mentally unstable state – not that he was all there to begin with – he spends the next 15

years in Smith Grove Mental Hospital under the supervision of Dr. Loomis (a crisp performance from Donald Pleasance). On October 30th 1978, however, Michael escapes ... The rest of the film is taken up with Michael's murderous mischief as he singles out a young girl named Laurie (Jamie Lee Curtis) for the cumulation (we are led to believe) of his escapade and with Loomis' frantic search for *The Shape*.

Carpenter assembled a fine cast which gave Jamie Lee Curtis her first important role and she handles it well. Nancy Loomis gives a fairly believable - well, how believable are teenagers depicted in American movies usually? - performance, yet the film belongs, in many ways, to Donald Pleasance who conveys Loomis' feelings of guilt and remorse, feeling that he is responsible for Michael and therefore responsible for the deaths, in a way that only an actor of his depth could.

Halloween is a standout amongst this kind of film in its cinematic technique, using a panaglide camera to superb effect, lending, as it closes in to reveal a feeling of *personal* horror and fear, a sense of cumulative paranoia (so very prominent in *Psycho*).

The panavision photography by Dean Cundy is framed with an artistic hand not often seen even in the best of genre flicks. The music too adds to a general sense of menace in its repetitive pulsing sounds which adds, one might say, an almost childlike concept of Halloween with 'trick or treat' being the most sinister aspect of the holiday now brought to the fore in a sadistic twist of elements.

It is not without flaws. It is perhaps a little too long - just a little. Occasionally it is annoyingly evasive in what we the audience feel it should be saying or showing. So many of the mysteries we wanted to find out the answers to, were not revealed until the disappointing sequel, **Halloween II**, in a haphazard and dismissed sense. There is a subconscious urge on the part of the audience when viewing to tie into the idea of death personified, the indestructible form of the 'final sleep'. Dr. Loomis pumps bullets into *The Shape* (in addition to his previous wounds) yet he *still* lives. When Loomis looks to see the supposedly dead Michael, fallen from the balcony, he is not there. Not seen walking away, but just ... vanished.

The series, like so many based on a good original concept, looks like it is doomed to the road of mediocrity, though to be fair, **Halloween III - Season of the Witch** (not truly a sequel) is fairly original in its presentation and a definite cut above the second fiasco. But let us remember how the original stood, a credit to all who were involved; proving that on a limited budget you can make a film of intelligence and integrity from subject matter that does not always warrant the care it receives.

HALLOWEEN (1978)

Donald Pleasance (as *Dr. Loomis*), Jamie Lee Curtis (as *Laurie*), Nancy Loomis (as *Annie*), P.J. Soles (as *Lynda*), Charles Cyphers (as *Brackett*), Kyle Richards (as *Lindsey*), Brian Andrews (as *Tommy*), Nick Castle (as *The Shape*), with John Michael Graham and Nancy Stephens. Directed by **John Carpenter**, Produced by **Debra Hill**, Screenplay by **Carpenter and Hill**, Cinematography by **Dean Cundy**, Music by **John Carpenter**, Edited by **Tommy Wallace and Charles Bornstein**. A Compass International Pictures Release of a Falcon International Production. 93 minutes. Cert. X.

FRIDAY THE 13th

Review

by **Anthony Tate**

If **Halloween** was the film which raised psycho-slashers on celluloid to a level of 'art', the **Friday the 13th** was the film that brought things back into perspective. Produced like **Halloween** on a low budget, it was a resounding success at the box-office, backed for the first time by the distribution of a major studio, Paramount. It was this big league interest that began to disturb a number of wise individuals who sat up and said, "Wait a minute, we're treating a fast-buck movie concerning brutal murders and butchery as a prominent part of an important movie trend?". It does make one think about the implications and moral placing for a moment.

Sean S. Cunningham produced and directed with a hand as capable as John Carpenter's - assuming John was trying to write poetry with a double woollen mitten on! In **13th** there are moments of suspense which could have been worthy of **Psycho** if only they had been handled with care, something Cunningham has trouble understanding. That the film was such a success assures it of its place in genre history and as such warrants discussion.

Cunningham produced Wes Craven's sadism exercise **Last House on the Left** (1972) which, despite being a truly sick film, showed Wes Craven's potential as a director, especially in his handling of 'touchy' material. Given the right film he could be a major, though as of yet he has not been given that opportunity. It is his *honesty* as a filmmaker that shows in his films. Cunningham lacks that, as witnessed in his earlier efforts including **Poor White Trash Part II** (1976) and **Kick** (1979).

The plot (there is one - just!) of **Friday the 13th** follows a series of murders at Camp Crystal Lake, 22 years after a first incident took place in 1958. The gory 'goings-on' that follow lack pacing in the build-up needed to bring the horror off. Only in the final sequence (a rip-off from

the end of the excellent **Carrie** (1976)) with the 'shock' ending does the film achieve anything like what it needs. Above all, the most annoying aspect of the film is the stupidity ridden clichés thrown at us. The 'dumb' teenagers (whatever happened to the part-way believable kids in **Halloween?**), the thunderstorm which stirs up at the climax so coincidentally, the car that runs out of gas at the wrong moment and so on ad nauseum.

From a technical standpoint, Barry Abram's photography is relatively pedestrian - except for the final scene - not taking the opportunities when they arise. Henry Manfredini's music is suitably creepy and menacing, though lacking in overall enthusiasm. It seems to fall heavily on a Bernard Herrmann style. Too heavily. The performances are uninspired, often laughable, with Betsy Palmer in particular going way over the top. What stands out in the film are Tom Savini's gloriously gross make-up effects; they are the real star. Only in one scene does the film come close to the artistic integrity of **Psycho** and **Halloween**, during the sequence where Jason has a misted recollection of a drowning boy in the lake. It is stylish enough to seem out of place in this film.

That the film was successful enough to spawn not one but two sequels, with possibly a third one to come (Please Paramount spare us) says something about today's audience, *especially* American movie-goers. If Part 1 is a bad film, though not entirely a lost cause, then Part 2 leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Yet now, with Part 3 in glorious 3-D, comes the final nail in the coffin. **Friday the 13th** is celluloid junk, the kind of junk that American audiences dote on. But it's truly enjoyable junk because it utterly refuses to take itself seriously and that may be the salvation for this (hopefully laid to rest) series. Part 3 plays more for laughs (well, some are quite unintentional) than you would expect and that is what saves the film from being totally offensive.

Friday the 13th had its day and has its place in genre history. Now please let us accept its death and no doubt tasteful rebirth in the form of **Psycho II**.

FRIDAY THE 13th (1980)

Betsy Palmer (as *Mrs. Voorhees*), Adrienne King (as *Alice*), Harry Crosby (as *Bill*), Laurie Batram (as *Brenda*), Mark Nelson (as *Ned*), Jeannine Taylor (as *Marcie*), Robbi Morgan (as *Annie*), Kevin Bacon (as *Jack*).

Produced and directed by **Sean S. Cunningham**, written by **Victor Miller**, Associate Producer **Stephen Miner**, Director of photography **Barry Abrams**, Music by **Henry Manfredini**, Special Make-up Effects **Tom Savini**. A Paramount release. 93 minutes. Cert X.

CAMPBELL'S COLUMN

Ramsey Campbell is a horror enthusiast. He astounded the fantasy field with his first book at age 17 and has delighted audiences ever since with a stream of original and distinctive stories, novels and anthologies; the most recent of which are *The Nameless* (Millington), *Dark Companions* (Fontana) and *The Gruesome Book* (Piccolo). Although he has won both the British Fantasy Award and the World Fantasy Award, he is never content with resting on his laurels as Britain's most respected and stylish horror author. Consequently, he also finds time to review horror films for Radio Merseyside, be Guest of Honour at numerous Conventions, act repeatedly as President of the British Fantasy Society and raise a family. His writings on horror films were a seminal influence on the British fantasy film fanzine world of the late-60s; we are proud to coax him back for a new generation.

So, Scotland Yard's persecution of videocassettes has achieved something, and the censorship of films on cassette is in even worse disarray than the censorship in cinemas. We're back to the good old days when horror had to be sold under the counter (Scott-Moncrieff's *Not for the Squeamish* in the forties, EC comics in the fifties). Still, they're only video nasties, and even the anti-censorship lobby can't be expected to care. Newspapers have made sure that any defence of the banned films looks as suspect as the films have been made to seem.

That is not exaggeration. The *Daily Express*, that bastion of freedom, even condemned video magazines for reviewing the films at all. Peter Chippendale, the *Sunday Times* crusader for video niceness, stayed stolidly unspecific about the films against which he was crusading, except to refer darkly to scenes of cannibalism and multiple murder. Had he been assigned to save the paper's reputation after another staff writer had suggested in the colour supplement that a video film about cannibalism could be fun? Had he even seen any of the films? Never mind: all that matters is that he prevented the rest of us from doing so. Or rather, not quite; though I'm sure he would have liked to. In fact the offending titles are still in many libraries, and the trashiest of them have stayed on the shelf, despite the artificial publicity. It seems that people's taste can be trusted more than the censors would have us believe. Of course the least of the films are pathetic trash: *Driller Killer*, which has nothing to offer on any level except the graphic scene shown on the cassette box, or *SS Experiment Camp*, which uses the concentration camp as an excuse for soft-core sex and nude torture scenes. One can certainly see objections on grounds of taste (though how much more so than to the American television broadcast of *Holocaust*, its death-camp scenes interrupted by pantyhose commercials?) and to the blatancy of *Driller Killer's* appeal (though one might argue that its incompetence makes it inadvertently more honest about that appeal than, say, *Friday the 13th*), and I should not want to defend either film. The question is rather whether I should have to. Why should films and other fictions be treated as guilty until proven innocent? I believe it's the banning of a film that has to be defended, and in advance.

So what precisely is the objection to, say, *Macabre*? (I mean the recent cassette, not William Castle's black and white film.) I must give away the plot to make my point, but the secret of the film is there to be seen on the cassette box: this is the one about the lady who keeps her husband's severed head in the freezer when it isn't on her pillow. If the idea is objectionable — and the film never attempts to persuade us that such behaviour is appealing — what are we to

say of Oscar Wilde's play and Richard Strauss's opera, in which sexual obsession with a severed head is presented as deeply romantic? (The climax of the opera is, quite simply, orgasmic.) Ah, but *Macabre* is a film, and so must be suppressed. Why?

It may no longer be a case of treating film more harshly than the other arts: it looks more like one aspect of a growing censorship in Britain, including printed material — no great surprise from a government which, for example, preaches educational freedom while closing comprehensive schools. This is where the term 'nasty' is useful, by suggesting that once a film is classed as 'nasty' no further distinctions need or should be made. (I assume the term was invented by a nice reporter, though perhaps not: publishers have been using it for years to market the sub-James Herbert tripe that is flooding the horror shelves in bookshops and drowning the genre.) That way, a film such as *Death Trap* can be swept away with the rest.

Death Trap is Tobe Hooper's most successful essay in disturbingly black comedy to date — *Psycho* relocated in a setting as artificial as a Technicolor musical and retold as an uneasy joke. Hardly has Neville Brand murdered a female guest in his hotel, than a family with its own madman takes a room, followed by the murdered girl's father, with Brand's response to a photograph of the dead girl providing the most disconcertingly hilarious joke in the film. Of course there are scenes of disturbing violence; there needs to be, otherwise the film would be merely a comedy. Although the cassette is marketed as the uncut version, it seems to me to differ little from the version released to British cinemas, and I strongly suspect that the scenes for which the jury convicted the film were present in the certificated version. I would call that censorship by the back door, and deplorable.

Which brings us back to the disarray of censorship. British film censorship is our longest-running farce, not only in the vital matter of cutting and/or banning, but also in terms of certificates. Recent examples include an A, now a PG, for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, but an X, alias 18, for *Polltergeist*, apparently to please Spielberg, who rightly felt that a horror film with a milder certificate would be shrugged off by potential audiences: an AA, now 15, for *Creepshow*, to the dismay of the distributor, who vainly begged George Romero for gory out-takes. It is also blatantly apparent that material will be passed if the film is British but cut if it is not. Consider just one film, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. A spokesman for the BBFC declared that the film would have been given a certificate if the distributor had accepted cuts in two scenes: the finale, in which the grandfather fumbles killing Marilyn Burns, and the earlier scene in which she is chased with the

chainsaw. Given the material which the BBFC were prepared to leave in the film, anyone who can make sense of that decision deserves a prize.

It's hardly surprising that video distributors are floundering. EMI discovered belatedly that they were distributing a print of *The Burning* which was *fifteen seconds* longer than the certificated print, and called on video libraries to return their copies for replacement by the authorized version. (I gather the responses from video libraries were short and old-fashioned.) Even in the cut print, Tom Savini's makeups are spectacularly gruesome, yet every one of Savini's makeups has been cut from Intervisions's print of *Maniac*. I have not been able to find out if this was done in consultation with the BBFC, but if not, one can hardly blame Intervision for wanting to be safe rather than sorry. It looks like over-reaction all the same, particularly since the makeups seem to have been the film's only claim to fame.

The great merit of releasing films on video – perhaps the only one – was that it could bypass the vagaries of censorship. Now it looks as if films unreleased to cinemas will have to be cut according to exactly the same haphazard standards (possibly not haphazard in theory, but certainly in practice) as cinema prints, which takes no account of the way films are diminished by television. (Ask any of the wretches who supported the pirated *ET*.) Nice Peter of the *Sunday Times* seems worried because viewers can rerun gory scenes, and in slow motion too. Of course they can, and ruin the tape in the process, but so what? The crucial effect of video is that it changes film from an experience which, unlike prose, requires the audience to submit to its pace and its effects into an utterly controllable experience. Re-running makeup effects, particularly in slow motion, simply makes clear how they were achieved, certainly in the case of the simultaneously revolting and unconvincing *Snuff*.

The declared reason for the growth of video censorship is that children are being allowed to see such films. As a parent, I can understand the anxiety, but all the same, that argument leads inevitably to preventing all films unsuitable for children from being released on video, a proposal I imagine might give even the nicest crusaders pause. My experience is that the culprits are the staff of video libraries, many of whom couldn't care less how young their customers are or how unsuitable the material is that they borrow. Can it not be made law that all members of the libraries must be over 18, and that libraries must be licensed on this understanding? If not, may we know why? It's time that film – in particular the horror film – ceased to be made the scapegoat for censorship.



Pressbook · colour · 16pps · adults only
65p (\$2.00)



150 pix · 68 pps · colour · 1976 ed. £2.50 (\$7.50)

Make all postal orders/cheques (sorry, no cash)
payable to QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS and write to us at:

QUALITY MAIL SALE, 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP

Orders outside UK: add £1 (\$2.00 US)

HoH COLLECTOR'S ITEM BACK ISSUES



HoH1 45p
Illustrated adaptation of 1958 Dracula; Kronos; Lee biography & filmography; 1930s FX; Brazilian Horror, etc.



HoH8 45p
Quatermass strip, King Kong, Jekyll & Hyde, Hammer Science Fiction films, Lee's NEW Dracula, etc....



HoH9 45p
Quatermass Pt 2; Carrie, Kong (1931), Seizure, Squirm, De Palma, Living Dead At Manchester.



HoH10 45p
Curse of the Werewolf strip, Close Encounters, Sentinel, Fu Manchu, Son of Kong, Shadowman.



HoH11 45p
Gorgon strip Part 1, Harryhausen speaks, Cushing AS Dracula, Wizards, Sinbad, Zoltan, Burnt Offerings.



HoH12 45p
Gorgon strip Part 2, Heretic, Blood City, Witchfinder General, 1933 Invisible Man, Face of Frankenstein, etc....



HoH13 45p
Plague of Zombies strip; Star Wars; Uncanny; Paris Festival; People That Time Forgot; Godzilla; Zombies.



HoH14 45p
Million Years BC strip; John Carradine; Romero on Martin + review; Dinosaur films; Paris Festival Films.



HoH15 45p
Mummy's Shroud strip, Dr. Moreau, Audrey Rose, Blue Sunshine, Fanatic, Mummy's feature, Frankenstein etc.



HoH16 45p
Special Star Wars issue; Rabid, Psycho storyboards, Homebodies, Carreras interview, New Shandor strip.



HoH17 45p
Vampire Circus strip, Carreras 2, Harryhausen storyboards, Cathy's Curse, Child, Fairgrounds of Horror.



HoH18 45p
Frankenstein, Dracula and Werewolf strip, Cushing interview, History of Hammer I, Rattlers, Deep Red.



HoH19 45p
Reptile strip, Cushing filmography, History of Hammer II, Peking Man and Dinosaurs & Monster Birds.



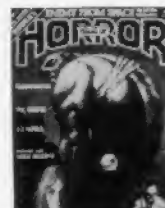
HoH20 45p
Kronos strip, Incredible Melting Man and Savage Bees reviews, Vampire Hunters feature, Hammer III



HoH21 45p
Chris Lee Speaks, Shandor strip, Wrightson, Bolton, Lewis art, Warlords of Deep.



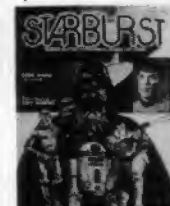
HoH22 45p
The Mummy strip, Sorcerers, Black Sunday, Roger Dicken FX, Hammer mummy films.



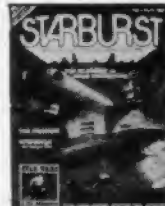
HoH23 45p
Quatermass 2 strip, Last Wave, Argento interview, 3-D films, Rosemary's Baby, The Shout.



HoH24 50p
Special all comic strip issue: Seven Golden Vampires, Quatermass Experiment ... 7 stories



SB 1 55p
Jeff Hawke strip, Making of Star Wars, Harry Harrison, Star Trek Writers, Trek episode guide.



SB 2 55p
C-3PO interview, Spider-Man, Ray Bradbury on Close Encounters, The Prisoner, Wizards.



SB 3 55p
Harrison Ford interview, Superman, Close Encounters, Logan's Run, Star Trek movie.

SUBSCRIBE TO HALLS OF HORROR

Don't risk missing a single issue! Save the time and expense of chasing round the newsagents with a subscription.

All copies are mailed flat in an envelope, and reach you weeks before copies hit the shops!

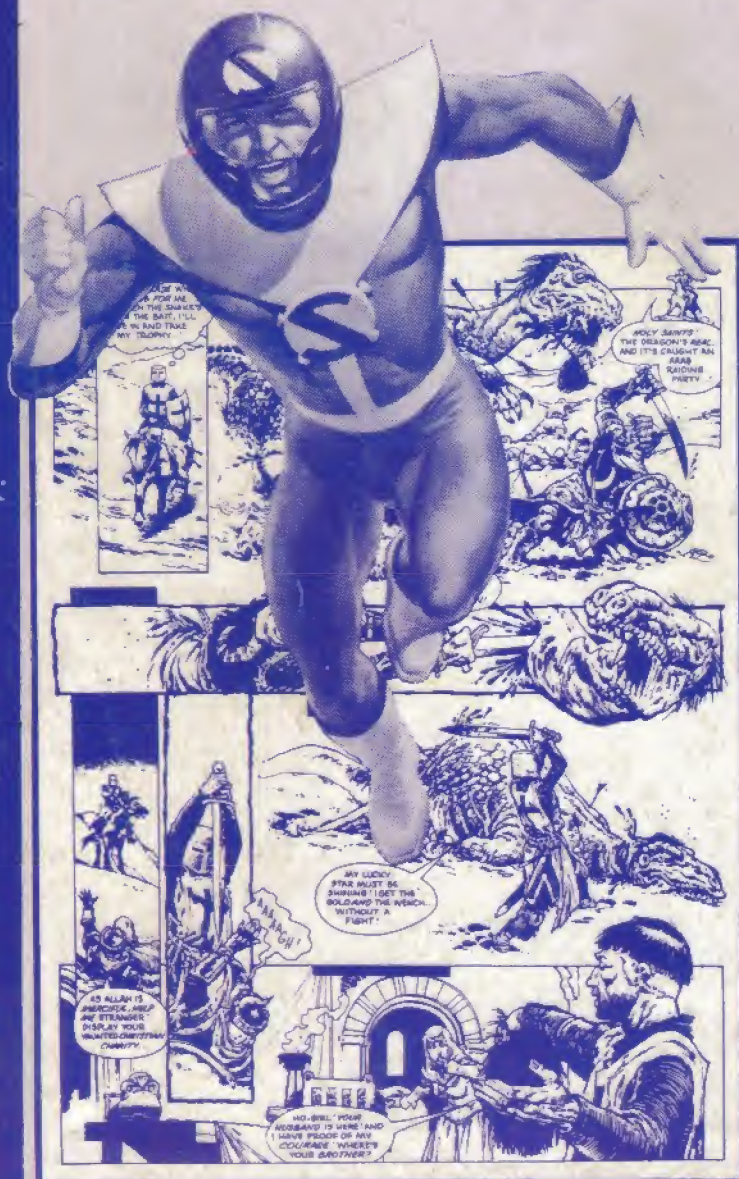
4 issues (annual subscription): £2.50 (UK only).

Make all cheques/postal orders payable to **QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS** and send to:
QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS, 3 LEWISHAM WAY, LONDON SE14 6PP, ENGLAND

Three stations from Charing Cross
you can meet your favourite heroes at

QUALITY COMICS

South London's top fantasy bookshop · 3 Lewisham Way, London SE14 Tel: (01) 691-7327



SUMMER SALE NOW ON

*American comics from
the 1940s to the 1980s.
Prices: 10p up

*American & British fantasy
film magazines from 30p

*Original comicbook art
from £5

*SF paperbacks at 50p -
Ace, Bantam, Del Ray, etc.

*Over 50,000 items
currently in stock



QUALITY COMICS

Open Monday-Saturday 10-6.00

Comics bought sold & exchanged

Opposite Goldsmith College
Buses: 21, 36, 53, 141, 171, 177

Train or Underground to:
New Cross or New Cross Gate